

FAMILY MEORIES OF CHRISTINE EPPS GARDNER

Compiled by her son, Bronson Gardner

Note: The stories contained in this file have been collated from several different video tapes..
The stories begin with extracts from an interview in 1999 by her grandson, Mark Gardner.



Mark Gardner in 1999

MARK: Grandma, can you please tell us your name, age, and address?

CHRISTINE: **My name is Christine Epps Gardner. I'm 79 years old. My address is 102 Birch Street, Vacaville, California, 95688.**



Christine in front of her house, 102 Birch Street, Vacaville, Calif.

ENTERTAINMENT

MARK: What did you do for entertainment?

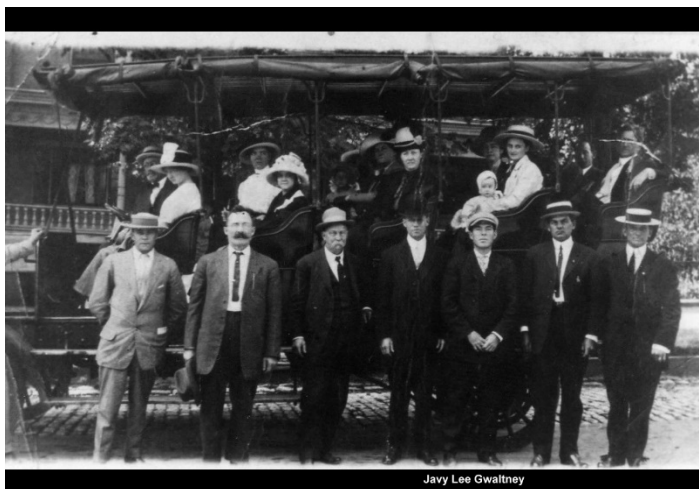
CHRISTINE: **Well, we didn't do anything, except at home. We still read a lot. We read books and we listened to the radio, and, uh, of course we went to church all the time. And we like to go see the ball games, and the movie... we always went to the movies on Saturday, because they had cartoons, and they had, um..a continued story. Always.... We went to the movies on Saturday. That was about all.**



Paramount Theater in Goldsboro

MARK: What type of transportation did you have?

CHRISTINE: **Um, well, when I was real small, I think it was a Model T Ford. And then later on, when I got up about 14 or 15, uh, my momma didn't have a car. So we rode with friends or took a city bus.**



Christine's Uncle, Javy Lee Gwaltney - taking the bus

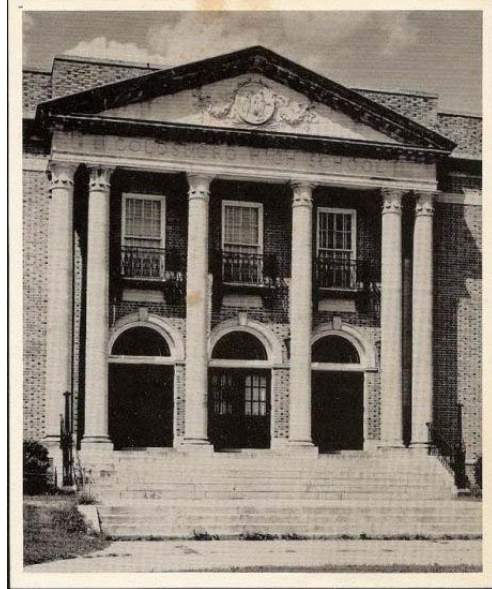
SCHOOLS

MARK: What type of schools did you have?

CHRISTINE: **We had some very fine schools. We had good teachers, and, uh, the buildings were nice, and the teachers were good, and so was the work they taught us. We had a real good school.**



William Street Grade School, Goldsboro, circa 1910



Goldsboro Highschool, circa 1940

MARK: How do the schools differ from today?

CHRISTINE: **Well, I think the main thing that's different today, and then when I went to school, that we thought the teacher... the teacher was in charge. I mean, anything that she said, we did it. Because she was just like our mother or father away from home, and we didn't dare disobey the school teacher, or... or our parents would get us. But they were very firm, and they were always in control. And... and the people really.... our children were taught... the parents taught them to respect the teacher. They weren't to talk back. They would just do what the teacher said. We thought she knew everything.**

CHRISTINE'S HOME

MARK: What were homes like?

CHRISTINE: **What was my home like?**

MARK: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: Oh, well, I think it was, um... We... we had a living room, and a kitchen, and a dining room, and I think three bedrooms, and a porch, and was painted white. Furniture wasn't rich but it was... it was nice, serviceable. And it was on three acres of land. We had three acres... a house with three acres of land on it. I mean, the house was on three acres of land. So we had a nice garden, and lots of flowers, and... and, uh, everybody there liked each other, so that made it a good place.



Home of Bertie Epps Gwaltney in Goldsboro around 1945



Gwaltney Family Gathering at the home of Bertie Gwaltney Epps, around 1945

MARK: What was the average size of the rooms?

CHRISTINE: **The average size of them?** MARK: Yeah, the rooms.

CHRISTINE: Oh, they were big ones. They were larger.... They were larger than, uh, they build the homes now. Each room was real... real good size. Like the dining room, you could put a great, big table and chairs in it, and still have lots of space. Or the living room, you could put quite a bit in it, it would have extra space. Most of the rooms were larger than they build them now. I don't know the dimensions. I wouldn't know how to tell you that. But they were just good sized rooms. You could put... put two beds in each room.

CHRISTINE – WORK TO GET DONE

MARK: What... what chores did you have?

CHRISTINE: **We didn't call them chores, Mark. They was just our work to get done. We did the dishes, and the floors, and we did the yard, and we mowed, and we worked in the garden, and we just did everything. I mean, everybody helped with everything. So we had plenty to do.**



Clarence and Bertie Gwaltney (brother and sister) and grandchild Bill Tudor Sadler- Bertie Epps' Garden in Goldsboro.



Christine - Cutting the Lawn



Miss Ory Thompson and Mary Epps - Getting some water.

THE FASHIONS

MARK: What were the fashions like?

CHRISTINE: **The girls cut their hair straight around with bangs, and we were eight or nine years old. And we wore, uh, just socks and “Oxfords,” I guess you call them. Just plain dresses and coats. I mean, I don’t know of any real style there, except the haircuts. Most of them did have bangs. Most of the girls wore bangs.**



Christine Epps

Christine Epps, elementary school, circa 1930, Goldsboro.

MARK: Mm.

CHRISTINE: **There were no long-haired boys. So they all had their hair cut short. This was about... about eight or ten years old, I guess. And then on up, they changed, and everything goes around, and comes back again. So been through the cycles.**

THE SEARS CATALOGUE

MARK: How did you do your shopping for clothes?

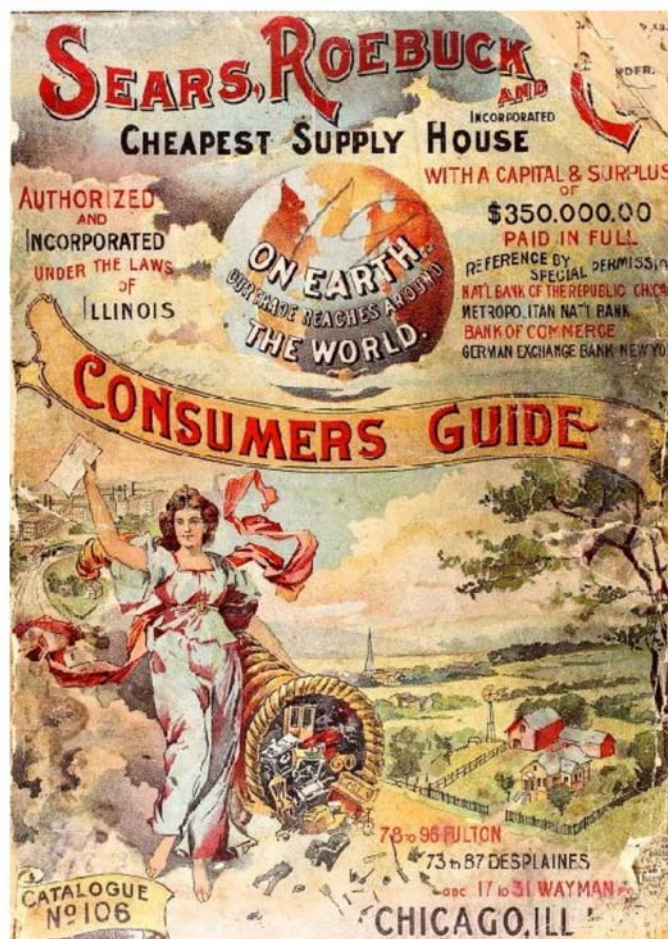
CHRISTINE: Well, when I was small, a lot of it was ordered out of the Sears catalog. But when I got older, a teenager, then we just went to town for it. We had some good stores, and some real nice stores. So we just went to town, picked them out. So when we were little, they... most the time they ordered our shoes, and coats, and stuff from Sears.

MARK: What was the Sears catalog?

CHRISTINE: What is the Sears catalog?

MARK: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: A big catalog that Sears and Roebuck had every year. And you could order any clothes, uh, household appliances, uh, anything from them. You could buy most anything there.



Cover of Sears Catalogue, 1930.

Note: in those days, the Sears catalog(hundreds of pages thick) was the paper equivalent of shopping "on line" on a site like ebay. They carried almost everything, including houses.

FOOD SHOPPING

MARK: How did you shop for food?

CHRISTINE: We just went to the store. We had several food stores. If you wanted fish, you went to the fish market. They were separate from the regular grocery stores. You wanted fish, or oysters, anything like that, any citrus fruit you went to a separate store. It was what they called the fish market. And otherwise we just, uh, just had us our regular general store that had everything. Cheese, and milk, and butter, and eggs, meat, whatever you wanted to buy, bread, just one big general store. They called it a “general store” because it had everything. If you wanted, uh, milk, or butter, or if you wanted a package of cheese, or if you wanted some fertilizer, or if you needed some ice, uh... It didn't matter what you wanted. You wanted a broom to sweep the house with, everything was there. I mean it was just... just a general store. They had just about everything.



Belfast Grocery, near Christine Epp's house in Goldsboro.

[Extracts From a 1992 conversation with Bronson, Mary, Tyffany and Jacklyn (e.g. Jacki).



Bronson in 1992



Mary Gardner Martin (1992)



Tyffany Martin in 1992



Jacklyn Martin in 1992



Christine in 1992

CHRISTINE'S UNCLES

Mary: How many brothers and sisters did she have? (Referring to Christine's mother, Bertie Obena Gwaltney)

CHRISTINE: **Oh, she had two that died during that flu epidemic in 1918. There was Uncle Royall.**



Royal Gwaltney

MARY: He died during that flu epidemic?

CHRISTINE: **Yeah. Uncle Royal was the single one. That's how.. that's how Roy got into the family. It started with Royal.**

MARY: Mm-hmm.

CHRISTINE: **OK. It was Royal, and Uncle Javy, Uncle Tince [Clarence], Uncle Cullen, and then there was a little one named Melinda that died a little girl.**



Clarence Gwaltney



Javy Lee Gwaltney



Cullen Gwaltney

MARY: That's her sister?

CHRISTINE: **And Aunt Libby. Uh-huh.**

MARY: OK.

CHRISTINE: **Can't remember them all. Aunt Libby and, uh, oh, uh... Ashley's mother. I can't remember her name. She had a bunch... Grandma had a bunch of kids.**

MARY The two and two...



Martha Taylor Gwaltney, with three of her children: Libby, Cullen and Bertie. A photo of her son, Javy Lee is on the wall.

CHRISTINE'S SIBLINGS

BRONSON: How many did your mother have total? (referring to Christine's mother, Bertie)

CHRISTINE: She had seven. Four died when they were under three. I can remember the three-year old. It was snowing. I remember when she died. But the other ones were infants. Maggie was her name. She had... she had a bunch of them. But one of them, Momma said it was so little, they'd take her around in a bucket. She was just the sweetest little thing.



The three children of Bertie Gwaltney Epps that lived beyond age 3.

CHRISTINE: You remember, uh, that "All My Children" show, there was a pretty, beautiful blonde on there named... they called "Nina"?

MARY: Oh, yes, uh-huh.

CHRISTINE: OK, Just reminded me, uh, Aunt Maggie's middle name... one of the... one of em's, Momma's sister was named Nina. First time I thought about it. That's an old, old name-Nina.



Bertie Obena Gwaltney (left) with her sister, Maggie Nina Gwaltney (right)

MARY: Hmm, I didn't know that. You know, back going through genealogy files, the middle - that's why their middle name, I guess ...

CHRISTINE: One of her middle names. You... you'll catch it sometime if you want.



Magge Nina Gwaltney Horne

THE FAMILY NAME ELROY AND FONZY'S MIDDLE NAME

MARY: "Uncle Roy" actually came from "Royal." Where'd the "Elroy" come from? That was it. Where'd the "Elroy" come from?

CHRISTINE: **I just don't know.**

MARY: 'Cause Uncle Roy, is his name Roy or Elroy? You know, his... like his given name?

CHRISTINE: **His name is Roy, but it should have been Elroy. I think it was supposed to be. But, uh, you know, I don't know.**

BRONSON: Well, isn't "F.E." Fonzy Elroy?

CHRISTINE: **I think it's Elroy.**

(Note: Christine's brother's given name is Fonzy Elroy Epps, e.g. F.E.)

MARY: What's wrong with an El Ray?

BRONSON: Isn't Fonzy...?

CHRISTINE: **I think that Roy's name is Elroy.**

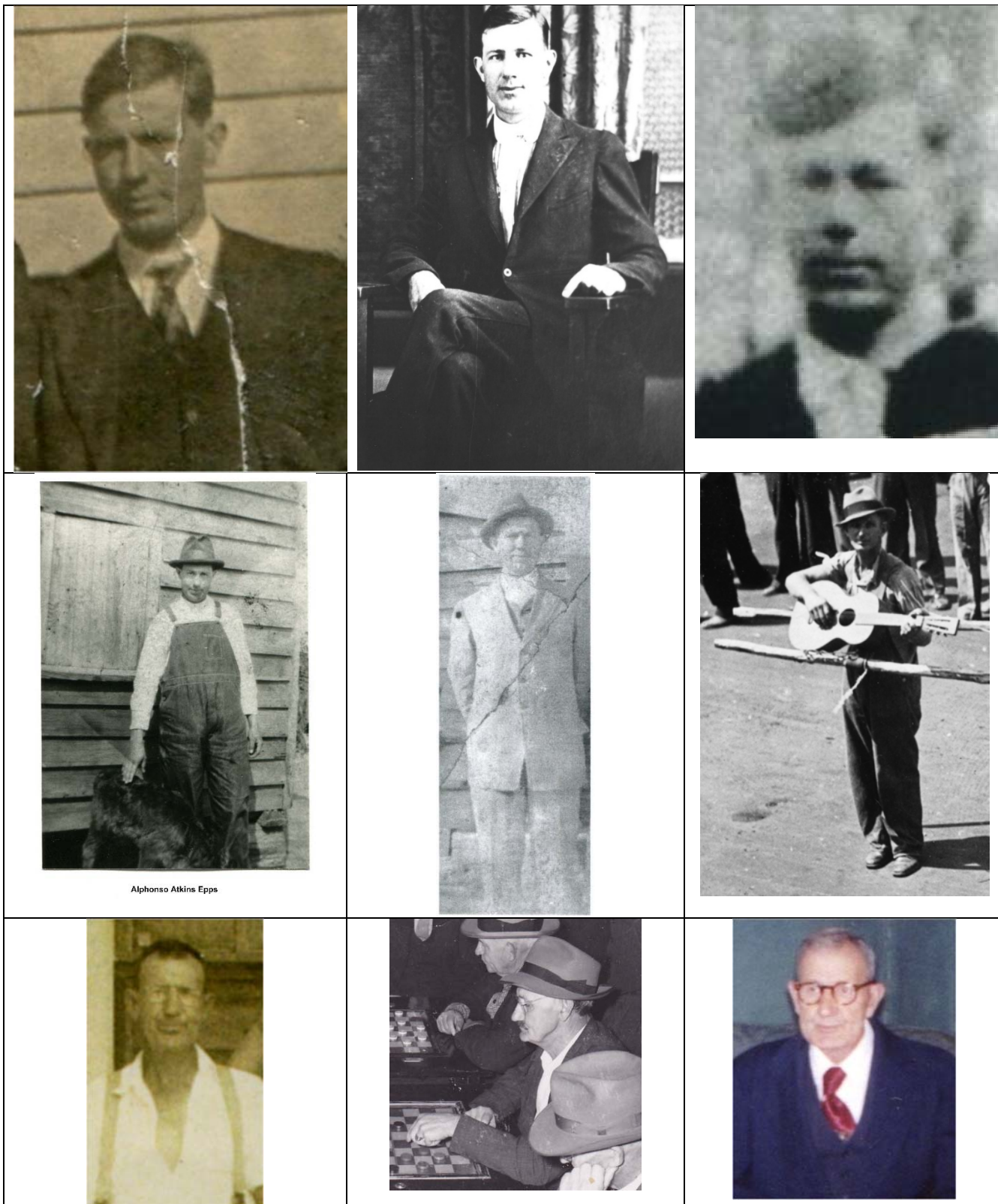
MARY: F.E. , yeah, Fonzy Elroy. I wonder if that's the backwards of "Royal."

BRONSON: um.

CHRISTINE: Don't know if that has anything to with it or not.

MARY: Uh-huh.

CHRISTINE: But Dad's name was Alphonso Atkins, but he called himself "Fonzy E. - F.E. So I guess he's the one who put the Elroy in it, I think. You have a time, when you start genealogy, people can change it so.



Alphonso Atkins Epps

Photos of Alphonso Atkins (a.k.a Elroy) Epps - Christine's Father

UNCLE CULLEN'S PERSIMMON BEER

MARY: Who was it that used to make, uh, hot cumquat, Apricot nectar, or ...

CHRISTINE: Oh, that was Uncle Cullen, made persimmon beer. MARY: That's it.

CHRISTINE: He had a great, big keg, and he'd keep a tap on it until it ripened up, 'til it... 'til turned.. MARY: Right.

CHRISTINE: We'd keep drinking it until one day we'd find a lock on it. Then we'd find out it was turned, then, you know, it got the alcohol content. That sure is good stuff. I imagine it'd be real good if you could get the lock off. MARY: [LAUGHS]

CHRISTINE: [LAUGHS]

MARY: That was your mom's brother, younger brother?

CHRISTINE: Mm-hmm. He's the one that gave the big barbecues for the police department, the lawyers, and stuff out of his house.



Cullen Gwaltney, with his arm around miss Ory Thompson.



Cullen Gwaltney and his wife, Frankie Anderson

LIBBY'S HOUSE

MARY: Yeah, up at Aunt Libby's house... I've been meaning to ask you. I remember going in the front door, remember the... Were there hardwood floors?

CHRISTINE: Aunt Libby had hardwood floors.

MARY: OK. So hardwood floors, and... So I remember, you go to the left. And I remember having... she had like lace... like a, um, lace... heavy lace-type bedspread...

CHRISTINE: Yeah.

MARY: ...to the left. And it was a real nice, fixed-up room. And then you left that, and there was a hallway, and kind of the bedrooms on the left, and then a big, open living room. The kitchen was to the back, wasn't it? I can remember that.

CHRISTINE: Well, I'm surprised.



Outside Libby's House about 1945.



Libby Gwaltney's Home on Fedelon Trail in Goldsboro in 1971. Note the change in the porch from the earlier photo.

MISS PARRISH'S HOUSE

MARY: And the house, I was particularly impressed with. I remember hurting my heel in the back. And then there was a little house to the... What was it? The back of the house, to the left of the back of the house.

CHRISTINE: That was Miss Parrish's house.

MARY: Miss Parrish it was real tiny, but she had it fixed real neat inside.

BRONSON: Tell us about Miss Parrish.

MARY: Yeah. I remember her house.

CHRISTINE: That was Uncle Paul's...

Jacklyn Martin: Huh?

BRONSON: Tell us who Uncle Paul is.

CHRISTINE: Oh. Well, Paul Sadler was married to Momma's sister, Libby. And I think Miss Parrish was his aunt. I believe it was.

MARY: OK.

CHRISTINE: She lived alone over there.

MARY: Yeah, it was... it was so neat 'cause it was so small. And I remember going... It was just like one room with a little kitchen out there, and then a bathroom.

CHRISTINE: Yeah, she ... Everything was arranged so nicely in there.

MARY: I've always looked for a house like that. Every time I see a little, tiny house, that's what I... what I think of.



The little house behind Libby's home that Miss Parrish lived in. "Miss Parrish" was "Bertha Parrish" (1891-1983) and her husband was James William Underwood (1888-1958). She was the sister of Paul Sadler's aunt's husband, Clifford Edward Parrish. Paul's aunt was named Lulu Baker Parrish. So Bertie was Paul's aunt through marriage.



James William Parrish (1888-1958)



Bertha "Bertie" Parrish Underwood
(1891 - 1983)

TINCE (pronounced "tie-nce) GETS HIT BY A TRAIN – MERRY CHRISTMAS

CHRISTINE: Could you find a kleenex? Usually, if you have a big family there'll be one that just has the best sense of humor. It's always... Like Momma's brother Tince, you know when the... he got hit by the train. **MARY:** Yes.

CHRISTINE: [CLEARS THROAT] They took him in, and your Aunt Mary went up. And he was... he knew he wasn't going to make it, you know. And she said, very weakly he did his hands, and said, "Merry Christmas." [LAUGHS] I mean, that was Tince for you, all over. I mean, he didn't change his...personality a bit, you know.

MARY: [LAUGHS] Right.

CHRISTINE: "Merry Christmas." **MARY:** [LAUGHS]

CHRISTINE: Your aunt Mary said that she and Tince made a pact that whoever went to the next world first would come back and tell the other one.

MARY: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: And she was real nervous for a long time.

MARY: [LAUGHS]

CHRISTINE: [LAUGHS] I haven't mentioned that to her for a long time. I think I'll ask her next time I go back to visit. [LAUGHS]

MARY: Ask her if she's been back to visit it.



Clarence "Tince" Gwaltney, with the family dog.



Clarence "Tince" Gwaltney with his niece, Christine Epps.

AUNT MARY'S DREAMS

BRONSON: She's had a few interesting dreams, hasn't she? (e.g. Mary Spiron, her sister)

CHRISTINE: She did what, what?

BRONSON: She's had a few interesting dreams.

CHRISTINE: Oh, your aunt Mary? BRONSON: Yeah.

CHRISTINE: Oh, boy. She sure has. You'll have to get her. She's told me about some of them, but I wouldn't want to repeat any of them because I couldn't remember the details.

MARY: Right.

CHRISTINE: Don't you suppose it's because she works with genealogy so much, and thinks about it so much and... BRONSON: Mm-hmm.

CHRISTINE: ...looks at pictures.....and dates and...?



These are lap robes I
made for the VA Hospital
Mary Spiron
November 1992

ASHLEY WALKS THE SNAKE

CHRISTINE: We had a good time growing up. We really enjoyed it! My cousin was down at the river. His name was Ashley...And we were standing in the yard watching him come home. He was coming from the river and he'd been down either swimming or fishing. And, uh, he'd walk a little ways, and then he'd stop, and look down, and... and start up again, walk a little ways. And he got close enough to see, we could see... tell what he was doing. He was leading a snake home. He caught it, and put a rope around his neck... [LAUGHS]

BRONSON: [LAUGHS]

CHRISTINE: ...and was making him crawl. **BRONSON:** [LAUGHS]

CHRISTINE: And Grandma screamed, said, "get that out of here!"

[BACKGROUND: Jonathan Saltman: [yells and grunts]]

BRONSON: [LAUGHS]

CHRISTINE: He was a nut. **BRONSON:** [LAUGHS]



Ashley Horne with Mary Ep

CHRISTINE GETS MAD AT MILDRED – AND LEAVES HOME

CHRISTINE: Ashley was--he was my first cousin. And his sister (Mildred Horne) was the one that, um, I got mad at when I was about five or six years old, and left home. I was about five or six years old, and we had some big oak trees in the yard. And when they lost their leaves, uh, we would build, uh, houses out of 'em. We'd build seats, and beds, and stuff by the leaves. We had fun. And I'd built me a good house. And my cousin that was bigger than I was, she must have been about 13, messed them up. And I couldn't... she wouldn't stand still and let me hit her!. And I got real mad, went in the house, and I got me some food, and a sack, and put me on a hat, and I left home. And my grandmother saw me, followed me all the way down 'til I got tired and sit down. And then she came and talked me into going back. She said Daddy would miss me when I got home and all that stuff, you know.. And I... she talked me to going back.

But, when she {Mildred} grew up, she was real prissy, she was real ...just did everything right, she was real prim, prissy. And, Ashely was the very different. He and I used to go out when it was snowing a little bit in the winter time, and get us snow and mix it up, and then sit behind that stove in the kitchen and eat it.

Oh – the boy I told you about, my first cousin (Ashley) that made the snake walk back from the river, his sister (Mildred) studied to be an RN and she graduated in being an R.N. and then married a doctor. So, tell Janet she can carry on the profession 'cause...



Mildred Horne

Note: Mildred helped Christine on the night that Christine's son, Bronson was born.

GRANDMA EPPS'S HOUSE

Christine: We had ...grandma had a kind of a house they built in those days. They built a big porch around it and you go up the porch and if you went to the right, you went to the kitchen and the kitchen is where the cooking and things went on, so that they didn't bother people in the house. There was a room right there, and everything for them to cook. It was made when they had slaves, servants. But it was a nice old house.

The family doesn't have a photo of their home, but this 1914 photo of the Ivey Harrell Home in Goldsboro fits Christine's description.



GRANDPA TAYLOR HATED CATS-AND TAYLOR FITS

Christine: I had a grandpa and he didn't like cats any more than I did. Durn cat got in the house, he kicked it clean down the stairs [lot of laughing]. But he didn't like cats, he just didn't like cats. And he was in the war – civil war – Bronson – Now, who was that?

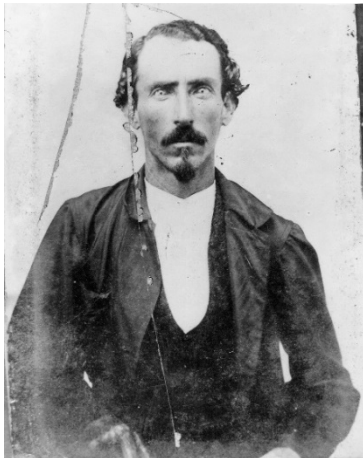
Christine: Grandpa Taylor – George Taylor . He was –and he would come home after he got his pension and he'd come home-- bring us candy and give us some sum of money, you know, every time. But, he sure did hate cats. He'd come down with his ladder, I mean his black candle – meow- at that cat.



George Taylor and his wife, Olive Carmack



George Taylor



George Taylor



George Taylor

Bronson: I've heard the phrase "A Taylor Fit"

Christine: Yeah, oh Lord don't get him mad! He went all over. I never heard him really hurtn' anybody, but he made you think he was going to. They said I was like Grandpa Taylor. I had Taylor Fits...Once in a while, but not all the time. But he was a real loveable old fellow.

FONZY GOT MEAN AROUND CHRISTMAS

Christine: But, my Daddy was real mean about Christmas time. He would pick something to scare grandpa. He'd fix up different costumes and thenup and grandpa would come in the house, you know, and he –what's that thing out there – and who is it– and all that stuff. He would get mamma upset. That was mean. But, grandma made him stop.

Note: there is real confusion in the records over the true middle name of Christine's father. In the Bertie's family bible, Bertie records Fonzy's full name as "Alphonso Atkins Epps". This is the name his children have always accepted as accurate. He was usually called "Fonzy".

In various documents, Alphonso spelled his middle name two ways: "Atkins" and "Adkins". The 1900 Census listed his name as Alfonzo **E.** Epps. Multiple official records after 1950 refer to him as F.E. or Fonzy Elroy Epps. Despite this, his children Roy, Mary and Christine all insist his middle name was actually Atkins because of the family bible entry.

His mother's brother's was named Dudley Adkins Powell. Fonzy signed his 1917 draft registration card as "Fonzy Adkins Epps" (not Atkins).

But, Fonzy's official delayed birth certificate (not issued until 1956) lists his middle name as Elroy. This certificate shows that he submitted a sworn affidavit signed by his mother, Lucy, that his middle name was Elroy. The 1934 and 1948 Goldsboro City directory lists his name as Fonzy E. Epps. In 1945, the Goldsboro city directory listed him as F. Elroy. The North Carolina Index to vital statistics gives his birth date as March 11, 1893 and his full name as Fonzy Elroy Epps. But the Goldsboro Index to births, lists his new born son as "Fonzy Elroy Epps" and his name as "Fonzy Adkin Epps" Head headstone, lists his name as "Alphonso 'Fonzy' .

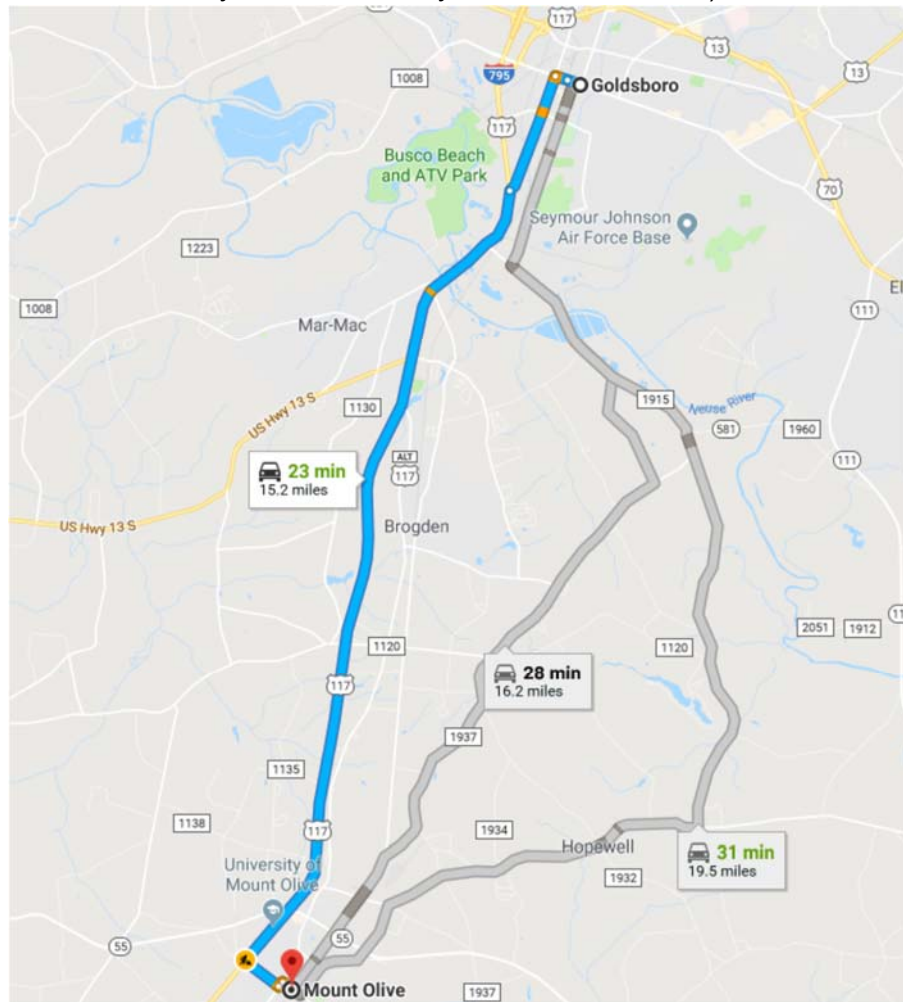


GRANDPA TAYLOR WALKED A LONG WAY TO WORK

Christine: But he would walk. When he was walking, he walked from Goldsboro –I started to say Newburn, but that’s not right. I believe it was Mt. Olive. About 15 miles. He would walk about 15 miles to go to work – right down the railroad track. He would.

Bronson: That’s a long ways!

(Note: Mt. Olive is almost exactly 15 miles directly south of Goldsboro).



THE TRAIN ENGINEER'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT

Christine: When I grew up, we lived on the railroad. How far was it from my house to the railroad, Bronson, just a short?

Bronson: I'd guess about 100 feet.

Christine: OK. It was close by. So every time the train would pass, we'd wave to the engineer. And one Christmas, he stopped the train and got off with the prettiest baskets of fruit and different things for us. Boy, they were good!



We don't have a picture of the train or engineer that stopped at Christine's house, but it must have been something like this.

WHY UNCLE ROY COULD RUN

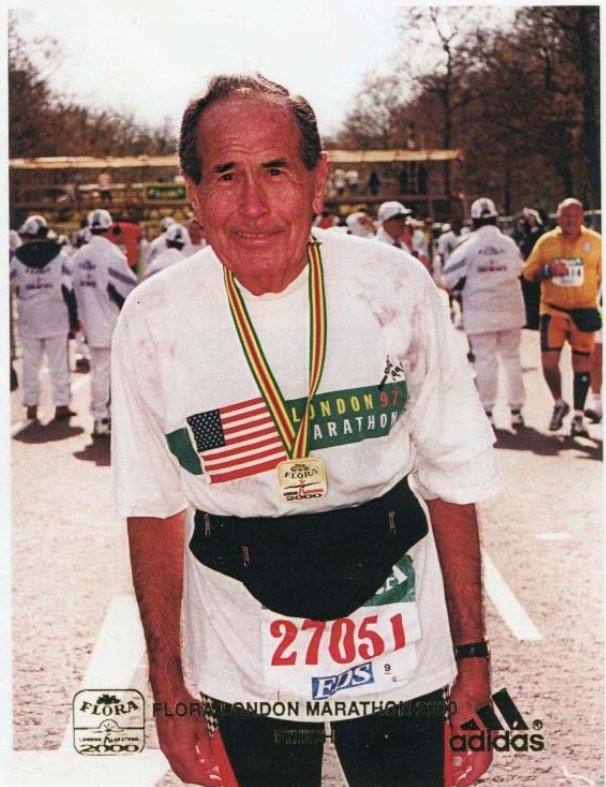
(from an interview in 2007)

Christine: Your Uncle Roy, Bronson, also started running marathons and he's still running them. Not half marathons, he runs a full marathon each time. That's 25, 26 miles, I believe. 26 miles I believe He's 80 – he's five years young than I am, so he'll be 82 in September. I'll be 87 in September– and still running marathons. He's run marathons in England, Ireland and of course all the states, Florida and all that stuff. He wife went over with him one time, in England, when he was running a marathon over there.

But I'll tell you a secret how he got so good at running. He was five years younger than I was and he could out run me. And every time I'd get mad at him, I'd chase him. I was constantly mad at him. So I would chase him all over the corn field, all over the cotton field I never did catch him. But, one day I was REALLY mad at him. I mean really mad at him. I chased him until I was tired and couldn't catch him. So I came home and I said he'll be here after a while. He's got to come home. And I hid behind the kitchen door. And when he came in, I'll let you guess what I did! I got him! But he made me tired, running all the time.



Roy Epps - at the age when his sister, Christine, chased him a lot.



Roy Epps was a runner his whole life. Here he is after completing the London Marathon.

HOW CHRISTINE GOT HER NAME

Bronson: Tell us about being named by the doctor:

Christine: OH!, I was supposed to be .. The doctor , mama, of course always was in bad shape, I was born at home. He wanted to know what my name was. She said “Name her after mama”, that was grandma and Christine, that was mama’s name. So, that’s how I got **Mattie**. You see, Grandma Gwaltney’s name was Martha. And, when your name’s Martha, quite often, they’ll nickname you “Matt” or Mattie. This is a nickname. So instead of puttin’ down grandma’s real name, Martha, he’d always called her Mattie, so he put down Mattie. I couldn’t think of an uglier name, for me. I mean, I just...

Mary: Do you like Martha

Christine: I like Martha

Jackie: You don’t like a Martha, though

Christine: I don’t look like a Martha ?

Tyffany: No, I just can’t image calling you grandma Martha! I just couldn’t do it. [lot of laughter].

Christine: Grandma Martha - guess so! That’s the way a lot of people get named—they get named for somebody else.



Martha "Mattie" Elizabeth Taylor, holding grand daughter Mattie Christine Epps.

GRANDMA EPPS – A HOLY ROLLER

Christine: Now, my grandma Epps was Holiness. She was what they called “The Holy Roller, Holiness”. Grandpa Epps, my Dad’s mom, was just complete Holiness. She was really converted to her religion, see. I went to her church a lot, every once in a while. And they’d have what they called a camp meeting. They’d shout and sing, and have a good ol’ time.



Lucy Powell Epps



James Charlie Epps Family
Turkey, Sampson County, NC October-Nov 1920.

Back Row: Bertie Gwaltney Epps, Alphonso Epps,
Luby Epps holding Mattie Christine Epps (grandchild), Viola Epps, Annie Epps

Front Row: Lucy Epps (with a scarf, not a tie), Clifton, James Charlie Epps,
Mrs. J.M. Patterson (family friend) holding Everette Meters Epps (grandchild)

The family of James Charlie Epps and Lucy Powell

GRANDMA EPPS PREDICTS HER PASSING

Bronson: Once of your grand mother's, when she died, announced to everybody that she was going to die.

Christine: Oh – that what grandma Epps. Early that morning, she woke up, and said I want you go get Lily, and she named the different ones. And they were all around when she died.

And one of my aunts had the same premonition. She knew she's going to die that day. And she wanted them all in there. And Viola was / is the youngest one. Maybe your Aunt Mary remembers more about it than I do. But, anyway, Lily was always a character. She said, you watch Viola. When I die, she's going to faint! ([much laughter from Christine]). I don't know if she did or not.

Bronson: That's funny, your Aunt Mary...

Christine: I'll have to check out that story. 'Cause she can remember every little detail and everything. That's the way they told it -- Watch Viola, now she's going to faint!

Mary: Would they just pass away. I mean, what happened?

Christine: I think people have premonitions or know, you know, when they're going to die. But, anyway, she did. She wanted them all there.



Christine's Aunt Viola Epps (her uncle Clifton Epps is in the background)

GRANDMA GWALTNEY – A BORN STORY TELLER

Christine: You know, your Aunt Mary and I really missed the boat by not having Grandma Gwaltney not writin' down the stories that Grandma Gwaltney told us.



Martha Elizabeth Taylor Gwaltney

Christine: We lived at Grandmas' (Grandma Gwaltney) for a long time. They had a one of the big six foot fire places. We'd all gather around Grandmas just like a bunch of biddies around a hen, you know. And she'd tell us these ghost stories. And the more scared we got, the closer we'd get to her. The closer we'd get to her.

And , uh, Grandma was a born story teller. That's all there was to it. She was just born. She could tell you the time of day about going to the store and keep you spell bound all the time because you all the time because you just knew something was going to happen, you know.

Mary: This is your grandma?

Christine: This is grandma Gwaltney. We'd gather around her and we'd say "Grandma, tell us about the lady that turned Seth into a deer and they shot him with a silver bullet and she died, you know. We told her the whole story, you know.

Mary; Do you remember any of her stories?

Christine: That's where your aunt Mary and I missed the boat. We can remember bits and pieces. But we'd tell her the whole story, and then she'd start over and she'd make that one sentence last about 30 minutes. It was the tone of her voice, and we'd get more scared and we'd get closer and closer and closer and closer. Your aunt Mary and I really missed it by not writing them down. Your aunt Mary and I have been so sorry that we didn't write down those stories. 'cause Grandma knew all the incantations the old lady would say. Like she was going out somewhere, she would say "Over thick and through thin" and then she would

just fly and just breeze. But if she made a mistake in her incantation and said “over thin and through thick” then she’d get caught in the brush and things [a lot of laughter] and she’d turn herself into cats.

But Grandma taught Sunday school for 40 years – the same class – and nobody wanted to leave it. They said “well you’re old enough and have got to move on” but they would object. They didn’t want to move. So, she could make Bible stories just as interesting as she did the ghost stories and the witch stories.



Photo take about 1915 at the Greenleaf LDS church. Libby Gwaltney in big hat on left. Martha Gwaltney in the middle, back row. F.E. Epps is the last person on the right. Boy seated on the far right is Clarence Gwaltney



Bertie Gwaltney Epps looking through the screen door at her mother, Martha.
Photo taken at 205 Bickett in Raleigh N.C. at the home of Christine and Jack Gardner. Their house was being used for LDS Sunday School.

GRANDMA GWALTNEY JOINS THE CHURCH

Bronson: When did your mother get converted to the church?

Christine: Oh, Grandma Gwaltney was converted to the church about 1900 and something. They were all members of the Presbyterian Church and the Mormons came. They went to the Presbyterian Church, that's what it was.

Mary: That's actually recent, in terms of genealogy.

Christine: It was about 1900 , something like that. But, let's see now. Grandma joined, but Grandpa Gwaltney, he never joined anything. The only time he went to church was to help take in the Christmas tree. He did do that. We cut those big holly trees, with red berries. You know how prickly they are. We'd go out and cut a real holly tree. And it was beautiful.



Libby, Clarence, Martha, Albert and Anne Gwaltney - about 1915



The prickly leaves of the Holly Tree represent the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when he was crucified. The berries are the drops of blood that were shed by Jesus because of the thorns. In Scandinavia it is known as the Christ Thorn. In pagan times, Holly was thought to be a male plant and Ivy a female plant.

SACRAMENT CUPS AT CHURCH

Christine: When I was growing up, they blessed one glass of water and passed that glass down. And, I've seen Grandma Gwaltney not take it because the kid just before her had a bad cold, or something --- she wouldn't take the water! I can remember Grandma not sipping when that kid with that bad cold or something sipped before her. Then they got the individual cups, but they were glass. And mama volunteered, I guess, then we would know they were clean. So we took the sacrament service home every week, and washed it thoroughly and cleaned it and brought it back. And then – they finally got paper cups. Phew ... that was a long, long time! I have never understood why they didn't just have several glasses. If you're going to have one glass instead of taking this one glass and passing it down each row, you know. One glass for each row, and take a sip.

Bronson: I think that probably originated from the Catholics, that's the way they do things. They sip from one big cup. **Mary:** One big chalice.

Christine: **The Catholics do that?** **Bronson:** Everybody sips out of the one cup.

Christine: **I can remember Grandma not sipping when that kid with that bad cold or something sipped first.** **Mary:** You can't really blame her.

Tyffany: Now they don't have paper cups, they have glass little – I guess, shot glasses. They don't use paper cups.

Christine: **That's what we had. Those are the ones we took home and washed and cleaned everyday.**



1925 LDS Sacrament Cups

Mary: Back then, didn't you have Sunday School, sacrament meeting at another?

Christine: **That was for Sunday School. We had Sacrament meeting at night time, and then Relief Society would be at one night during the week. Then finally when we had mutual that would be on another night. Everything was on a different day. We didn't have many members, see.**

CHRISTINE CLIMBS OUT THE CHURCH WINDOW

Christine was asked to tell the story about the time she climbed out the window during church.

Christine: ..And I wanted to get out of there, I just had to leave- that's all there was to it! I was about 12 years old. Momma directed music, she's sitting up on the stand, and she caught my eye and I looked right straight at her and I looked over at that window and she started shaking her head –No, No You don't! (laughter). I kept edging right on over until I sit down on that window sill, swung my feet over and right out I went. Now you talk about embarrassing, I mean, I embarrassed momma lots of time. Right in the middle of church—and me through the window! (more laughter).



The congregation at the Greenleaf LDS Branch (about 1942).
The view is from the pulpit area.



Christine Epps, when she was about
12 years old



Photo from about 1942. LDS Greenleaf Branch. Martha Taylor Gwaltney is in the front row, on the right, sitting next to Denver King (branch president). Bertie Gwaltney Epps is directly behind Martha. Christine Epps is in the middle of the back row on the left, looking out the window

BERTIE AND VIOLA'S HAIR COLOR

Christine: Momma had, it wasn't red - it was auburn hair. It was a pretty auburn color. And, when daddy was going with momma, Aunt Viola and her friends were always teasing daddy about having red headed children. Aunt Viola didn't have any children at that time. But when she got married, all of hers were red-headed and she (momma) and her husband didn't have a red-head and momma had red hair and she didn't have any red-headed children.



Colorized photo of Bertie Epps

AUNT LIBBY AND THE MORMON RITUAL

Christine But, Aunt Libby's had brown hair. She worked for a lawyer. And she had some kind of illness, scarlet fever, or something like that. And, anyway, it took all of her hair out, every bit. I think his name was Dukes. Anyway, he was the lawyer she worked for.

So, when she went back, she put a skull cap on because he had no hair. She got back and he said "Miss Sadler, what is the hat for?" She said "It's a Mormon ritual we do every year". HE BOUGHT IT. And so, she kept it on there until it grew out and she took her hair. And then she told him. And he said, "If I had known that I'd have taken that cap off of you". She said, I know you would – that's the reason I didn't tell you". But, now, when her hair grew back – hers came back an auburn.

But that was funny – it was a Mormon ritual! And people would believe anything you tell them in those days, it was a Mormon ritual! It was funny, Aunt Libby and Uncle Paul Sadler. Paul's hair was blond and he with blue eyes. Libby had that auburn hair and kind of greenish eyes, like mine, and each one of the children had brown hair and dark brown eyes. And when Sara Francis, Aunt Libby's first child --she only had two. And she taught her to say – Everybody would say "Where did you get those pretty brown eyes" and Libby taught her to say "From the ice man!" (laughter) But did, she had pretty brown hair. But that was strange that you, and neither one of the kids looked like either one of the parents.

But you look at your--- now you can't find three people closer than your Uncle Roy, your Aunt Mary and me. We don't look alike. There might be a slight resemblance between Roy and me, just a slight. But, Mary doesn't look like me.

Bronson: She's distinctive.



Libby Gwaltney

BERTIE THE STORY TELLER AND POEMS

Christine: But, Grandma, momma, knew all these long poems and long stories – and she could memorize ‘em. I mean, there was one that would take her 4 or 5 minutes to memorize and the other day, I was thinking about it and I believe I can remember 3 or 4 minutes of it.

Mary: That’s pretty good! Bronson: Let’s hear it, let’s hear some of it.

Christine: Well, there was a wealthy farmer who did in Oxford dwell. He had horses cows, and sheep and cows and plenty of good grain. It was the boot without dispute, he had a thrifty dame. Now one morning as usual when.... Oh, let’s see now. He came in from work. I can’t remember all that – just a minute Now, let’s see. How did it start out? Anyway he’d been out to plow, with his hired man, John. He came in from work and said “Hey madam lazy bones, why no breakfast made?” And she said, well she’d had the cows to milk and the children to care for, since he’d the works been gone. So they argued about that a while and she said that “if you’ll do the woman’s work, I’ll go and plow with John”. So they agreed, and the bargain was soon made. But, little did the poor man think what a deal he made.

Anyway, they went out and he had the children to content and said the pigs broke out and served themselves with cream. He picked up the churn stick and beat among the pigs and some he hit and some he missed and some he broke their legs. He said, it would have made a blind man laugh for to see the fun, the old sow turned around and bit him on thumb!

After all this torture he went through, he ran to the field to call his wife from plowing. And honest John was kissing her beneath the mulberry bough. So all you wealthy farmers, come and take advice from me, and see you shun the woman’s work and happier you will be! (laughter). Man has tried the woman’s work, but likes his own work best. So don’t you never grumble, if your wife sits down to rest. (laughter):

Mary: That’s good!

Christine: It must have lasted for 10 or 15 minutes. I mean, blow by blow. She could memorize a poem like that!

Mary: That’s delightful! Storytelling, good poetry, you know.

Christine: She could remember it! And, there’s one in there I have copied, word for word. There was a contest run, this was aback in the 1800s. Any person that could write a poem from the Bible that nobody could solve. If they could solve the poem, they got a big cash prize for it. Anyway, someone wrote one about Jonah and the whale. And momma got a copy of it and did that at church one night. And all these young missionaries, all of them, sure that they could solve it, you know. But, they didn’t. So, I’ve got it in my book in there. It’s called Jonah and the Whale. It tells the whole thing.

Note: The Poem is actually called "Who Am I?"

Bronson: Why don't you go get – let's hear it.

Christine: I don't know exactly where it is, just a second, I'll have to look that up. But, I want you to be sure to save it.

Mary: O.k.

Christine: Because, uh, he talks about him going on without arms and legs and going from pole to pole without arms and legs. And then he said that the Lord gave him a soul, then took he took from me that soul again -- he's talking about fish, you know, wanting to fish. He said,uh go read your Bible with all speed, my name's record there, honestly for you to declare. But nobody one could ever figure that thing out!

Mary: That's pretty good.

Christine: But I just happened to think about it, I want you to be sure to save that. [Mary: O.k.]) Did you ever hear about that Mother Shipley's prophecy? [Bronson: No). Well, I've got that saved in there, too. I want you to be sure to save that one.



Bertie Gwaltney Epps - The story teller.

Written by Bertie Obena Gwaltney
for her daughter, Christine

Adam God made out of dust
But thought it best to make me first
So I was made before the man
To answer God's most Holy Plan -
My Body He did make complete
But without arms or legs or feet,
My ways + acts He did control
But to my Body gave no soul
A living being I became + Adam gave to me my name
I from His ^{presence} ~~present~~ then with drew + more of Adam
I never knew.
For Purpose wise which God did see
~~A soul from me my god did claim~~
He placed a living soul in me, ^{the} a soul in me
My god did claim + took from me ^{that} ~~my~~ soul again
+ when that soul from me had fled I was the
Same as when first made so without arms
or feet or soul I travel on from pole to pole
no fear of Death dath trouble me
Real happiness I never shall see
To Heaven I shall never go or to the grave or Hell below
Now when these lines you slowly read
go ^{Search} surch your Bible with all speed.
For that my ^{name's} ~~name~~ recorded there,
I honestly to you declare -
The whole that

(Note on Back)

Who Am I - handwritten by Bertie Epps

" Name of Poem (over)

The whale that swallow^{ed} jonah."

Note:

9/7/80

mama wrote the "riddle" for me -
Christie

mama got it from a newspaper -

The Paper was running a contest to see
who could write a poem (riddle) that
nobody could answer -

This riddle took the prize -

I don't know the name of the paper
nor what year the contest was held -
C -

*Mary. This is from
"Comfort" magazine 1974-
(May 1974) I'm sure it's
not the entire poem because
I'd read it before & there
is much more to it—*



This one, also from the unknown lady, is an old one, written in 1485. You've maybe read it before, I have...

"MOTHER SHIPTON'S PROPHECY"

Carriages without a horse shall go
And disaster fill the world with woe
Around the world men's thoughts
shall fly
In just the twinkling of an eye
Waters shall great wonders do
Strange, yet shall it be true.
Through towering hills men shall
ride
And yet no horse be at their side
Beneath the waters man shall walk
Shall ride, shall sleep, shall even
talk
And in the air shall men be seen
In black and white as well as green
Iron ships on water shall freely float
As easily as any wooden boat
Gold shall be found in streams and
stone
Within a land that's now unknown
A war will follow all this work
Where dwells the pagan and the
Turk
Then, tax and blood, more cruel war
Shall come to every human door
And in the cruel, far off days
Women will adopt the craze
To dress like men with brazen stare
Cut off their beautiful locks of hair
Then love shall die and marriage
cease
And nations wane as babes decrease
The wives shall fondle cats and dogs
And men shall live the same as
hogs..."

Christine: I tell you what I'll do: I'll copy them down and send you a copy and Bronson a copy. This happened way back in the 1800s, that she predicted the automobile and that the men would fly without wings, you know without wings they would fly. She predicted women wearing men's clothes—the whole thing. She wasn't a religious person – just a long poem she wrote. I will certainly try to remember to get those two. They're worth keeping.

BERTIE AND THE MILK COW

Christine: So, we had a milk cow and mamma milked that old cow. And there was a little old cat out there, and uh-- it would sit over every time mamma went to milk the cow, just like Jon and sit right up like that with his head up and mamma would squirt milk right into his mouth. She hit it perfect every time, until the cat got all she wanted to drink. [Bronson: That's your mother, right] Yes, mamma - Bertie Epps I've got a picture of that. [Bronson: I've seen that picture]. That's the cow that Mr. Hobbs let us have, as long as she needed it –



GOOD FOOD -SCOTT'S BARBECUE

Bronson: What kind of food did grandma, did you mother cook. What kind of food did you have growing up?

Christine: Oh, the food? We had every kind. We had all the kind of fruits- any kind of food that grew in a garden and the strawberries and fruits and nuts. We had pecan trees and walnut trees and apple trees and grandpa had strawberries he grew to sell to the store and every kind of vegetable you can think of. And we had lots of barbeque, barbeque and cheese, and fish.

Daddy went fishing a lot and mamma didn't like the fish in the house, so he built a place to cook 'em outside. He could cook good fish outdoors. Made out of brick. He did that real well. But if you wanted store-bought barbeque, we had some of the best in the country. You couldn't beat it. Did you know that they shipped that stuff to New York by air? [Bronson: What's the name of the place?] SCOTTS. Scotts Barbeque – and the best cole slaw and stuff to go with it and hushpuppies to go with it. But, you got the Jr. Scott –I mean, he inherited it from his dad. We got the Original stuff. That old man could really barbeque. It was cooked outside over an open pit and fire, you know. [Bronson: they put something in it that makes it so good!] Well, they put southern hot sauce or bell peppers or something on it, I don't know either. I know that they basted it with the hot sauce all the time that they were cooking it. 'Cause I can still see uncle Cullen basting that and when it started getting done, he let us pick off a piece here and there , But they still have a Scott's there. But since this must be about the third generation taking over now. But they did. I'd like to had the recipe. You can go to western North Carolina and you can't find it. This is strictly down in eastern North Carolina. You can't buy it - you go up to western North Carolina and you can't barbeque like they have down there.



Bertie Epps --Dinner is Ready in her kitchen!



Colleen Gardner, Roy Epps, Bronson Gardner and Christine at Wilbur's barbecue in November 2008. Scott's barbecue had gone out of business, but his recipe was taken over by Wilbur's. Everyone told Christine that she was eating "Scott's Barbecue". She love it and had a very good time.

ROY'S RV AND BARBEQUE

Christine: Well, last summer my appetite for barbeque saved your uncle Roy from having a lot of van trouble – you know that big RV he's got – that great big thing?. I said Roy, "we're quite a ways from the beach yet, I said how about stopping at the first barbeque place, you know, that's really good ?" They're all along the road, you know. I've just got to have some barbecue-so sandwich. So, he said "I'll stop at this" And when he stopped, he saw something about the RV had gone bad, it was the oil or water or something. Anyway, he stopped and repaired it and refilled it. He said if he hadn't stopped for the barbecue, I wouldn't have noticed this and we'd have had a burned out engine or something. Something big. I'll have to ask him next time. But, just that one stop saved him a lot of grief. I said "well, I got an appetite at the right time, didn't I ?". So, we decided maybe something spurred my appetite on. But, it's strange, you would think any part of North Carolina you could find that barbecue, but you can't. Note: Christine was in North Carolina during the summer of 1991.



Roy Epps with his RV - in Christine's drive way - 102 Birch St. Vacaville, Calif.

STEPHANON GRAPES

Christine: That and stephanon grapes [actually, scuppernong grapes], they're the most delicious grapes! Somebody from overseas brought 'em, I don't know what country it was brought 'em in. [actually, scuppernong are native to North Carolina] With all that sandy coasty in North Carolina ...



REMOVING THE RAILROAD TRACKS ON CENTER STREET- NO COWARDS

Christine: Oh, and my uncle, on the Epps side, we had an uncle that worked for the city water department. And, uh, Goldsboro had a set of railroad tracks that ran right into town, and people complaining and complained about going to town clean and coming back smoke all over 'em, dirty from the train and so, one night they made a big pact, and my uncle, Meters Epps organized a group—and conveniently, the judge all the high big-wigs in the city was all out of town – they were all out of town that night ! And so, he organized this group, and give 'em all the stuff they could drink – and they went down and took up all those railroad tracks in one night, in Goldsboro !

So, I've got a picture of it, where he made the newspaper up in the front. The night that Goldsboro had their tracks removed (laughing). The train company tried to sue them, but they didn't make any headway. But he went down, you know, for all the whiskey they could drink and all the food they could eat –they just tore up those railroad tracks and got 'em out. But they were right in the--you've been on Center Street, you know- well the rail road tracks ran right in the middle of Goldsboro – well, the railroad tracks ran right through there – and the men would dress up on Saturday and go with their white shirts and come back with soot all over after a train passed through. It was a mess. But, he got real famous for that.
[Bronson: That's funny!]

I'll put it this way –we had some characters! I didn't find a single coward in the whole bunch, so, they always did what they went for, if that.



Meters Epps, with his wife Bertie Parrish



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When the railroad tracks ran down Center St. . .



Center Street today, railroad gone, trees and hanging baskets added.

Everyone Simply Pretended It Hadn't Happened

The Night They Took Up The Railroad Tracks

By ROBERT ROUNTREE

It was midnight, unseasonably warm, and altogether illegal. But to the Union Trust Party.

On the night of April 3, 1966, acting on orders of the Goldsboro Board of Aldermen, City Manager Claude M. Greenham carried out what months of negotiations had failed to accomplish — the removal of the Southern Railway tracks from Center Street.

From midnight until morning, a force of 150 men worked northward from Spruce Street to Ash, unloading rails and digging up cross-ties.

As they were removed, they were transported on handcars to the Southern yards north of Ash, where they were neatly stacked in rows.

By morning the clandestine job was done.

Greenham had a reputation for getting things done. Working secretly, he had begun unloading equipment and men for the job. In addition to city employees, a number of industrial firms agreed to lend workers. The men were not notified until the day of the event, when they were told to assemble at midnight at 197 hall.

Greenham turned the job over to M. C. Epps, water department superintendent, and stayed away from the scene himself. Police were instructed to stay in the background. Workers were told to say they "didn't know anything." If asked who was getting in, they were to say they didn't know.

Epps is believed to be the only one living who took part in the track removal. Now blind, he lives at 1714 Maple Street. He says the work crew got busy shortly after midnight and completed the job about 6 o'clock the next morning.

"Railroad men from Rocky Mount and Greensboro had gotten word of what was happening and rode by to look at the results," Epps said.

Every hour during the night, according to Epps, workers were fortified with helpings of corn liquor from a peck pail. A man with a flower patterned whiskey, who seemed about as young as a child.

"Only three people got drunk," Epps recalled. "They were just in the back end of the city house."

Epps recalls that before the tracks were removed he had seen traffic backed up two blocks on Walnut St., while rail cars were being pulled.

"If you caught a window in a white shirt, it was going to get full of coal before you got back home," he remembers.

People abroad that night gave little attention to what was going on. Atlantic Coast Line was in the process of modernizing its tracks at the time and the suggestion was that it was part of the same operation.

It was a surprisingly kept secret. Nothing was said to the public and the public was unaware of what had happened until August 8, when a mail was filed against the city by Southern Railway.

Named in the suit were City Manager Greenham and McCreary, then Aldermen, A. T. Griffin, F. B. Dandridge, W. P. Rose, W. A. Carter, L. M. Oldham and John R. Hight.

The suit alleged that the action taken was in violation of a resolution adopted by commissioners of the laws of Goldsboro on Feb. 3, 1961, granting North Carolina Railroad a right of way on Center Street with permission to lay tracks, and the contract to "maintain, keep, operate, lease, dispose of, and protection of the constitution and laws of North Carolina and the United States."

It was alleged that a resolution passed by aldermen instructing Greenham to remove the tracks was in violation of the N. C. Constitution and of the 14th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution, both of which declare that no one shall be deprived of his property except by due process of law.

The action of Greenham was declared to have been "in total and utter disregard of the property and contract rights of plaintiffs."

It was asserted that the plaintiffs had reason to believe they could take no steps to "remedy the wrong inflicted upon them without causing breach of peace and open conflict with the forces of the defendant city of Goldsboro."

The suit asked that the court require defendants to restore and rebuild plaintiffs' tracks on Center Street between Ash and Spruce; that the defendants and their agents be permanently restrained from again interfering with plaintiffs' property or maintaining them in their "lawful operation, conduct and maintenance of said track and right of way," and that the plaintiffs recover costs in the action.

The complaint stated that North Carolina Railroad, on August 18, 1964, had leased to Southern, for a term of 99 years, a Center Street track and right of way, and that by terms of the lease "said co-tenant with lease that during the entire term it should have and enjoy quiet, peaceable and uninterrupted possession of the property rights, privileges and franchises pertaining thereto."

Southern was obligated, the complaint said, to return the track and right of way to North Carolina Railroad on expiration of lease "in like good condition and repair as when leased."

Southern would have been able and willing to comply with its obligation had it for the tortious, unlawful and unconstitutional acts of the defendant.

The officials of Goldsboro officials was a far cry from the reason nature and big celebration that had greeted the first train of the Wilmington and Weldon — later ACL — Railroad as it arrived on Feb. 23, 1838.

From Weldon through the "Swamp" and rural areas, came Southern's horse-drawn at the new railroad station, however, not to encourage transportation and trade forming an industry in its own right.

At the intersection of Maple Street and Goldsboro.

Editor's Note

"This Argus is the people's right to do an eternal right keep. No nothing strains at. Man's son can tell it hundred eyes to sleep."

Well, maybe just once.

The Daily Argus in April of 1926 closed all its "hundred eyes" while newspapermen ripped up the railroad tracks and crisscrossed them down the middle of Center St.

While railroad officials fumed and brought court action, the town simply pretended nothing had happened. And even the Daily Argus backed the other way.

That is one good story not to print. Mr. Rountree has done the research and later reported some of the people who were in on that midnight rap.

Here, a bit later, is full coverage of the story that changed the face of downtown Goldsboro forever.

filled with smoke and cinders. Freight trains whined floor, lay and fertilizers in front of wholesale houses, keeping the street streets with litter.

When Goldsboro embarked on an era of progress, building a new railroad.

On July 3, 1966, aldermen adopted a resolution, drafted by Mayor Greenham, that called on the State Corporation Commission to grant "special relief to a long suffering public" by requiring the railroad to build a "proper passenger depot."

The move was designed to reduce railway traffic on Center Street.

On January 4, 1966, a public hearing was held at city hall at which the Corporation Commission ordered the three railroads to build a new station, giving them 90 days to select a site.

On April 3, they reported that they had selected "Borden's Hotel" at the west end of Walnut Street, then outside the city limits.

They were ordered by the Commission to start construction at once.

Businessmen with interests on Center Street got out an petition may construction, saying the location would hurt property owners and make the railroad bypass the city, contrary to the original agreement.

The matter was taken to the State Supreme Court, which in August upheld the site selection.

Construction got underway and the union station was completed in 1968. A big crowd was on hand to see the first train, ACL's northbound 41, enter the station.

The same year aldermen adopted ordinances regulating freight traffic on Center Street. The speed of freight trains was reduced from 8 to 4 miles per hour; no car could stand longer than 3 minutes at any point, eliminating unloading operations; and shifting in the heart of town was limited to 3 hours in the morning and 2 in the afternoon.

With shifting operations in time confined to the north and south ends of Center Street, negotiations were started to acquire ACL's right of way through four blocks, which would give the city an argument for routing Southern, whose lower, North Carolina Railroad, had merely given permission for it to lay tracks on the ACL right of way.

Early in 1968, ACL agreed to cede to the city its right of way between Ash and Spruce in exchange for a freight yard site between Ash and Spruce in exchange for a freight yard site south of Goldsboro. Southern expressed willingness to remove its track provided NCRH, its lessee, would assume it from liability in the matter.

NCRH agreed to the track removal if Southern would deed it a mile strip of right of way which Southern had bought to get to its yards at the time Union Station was built.

Southern refused, it being the only mile of right of way it owned in North Carolina.

Negotiations resulting in a standstill, the city ordered Southern to remove its track, which it contended was on city property, following the deal with ACL. Southern still balked.

On March 13, 1968, meeting in executive session, aldermen passed a resolution directing City Manager Greenham to remove the Southern tracks "in such manner and at such a time as in his discretion, he shall deem advisable."

The resolution never came to light. Apparently reporters were not curious about its operative reason.

Greenham was a man who knew how to get things done. He assigned, in secret, he began making plans for carrying out his assignment.



M. C. Epps, shown here with his wife, is the only known surviving member of the crew of citizens that worked from midnight to morning to remove the tracks from Goldsboro's Center St. The removal was illegal, but Epps says it was justifiable. (Staff Photo)

On the day of the track removal, he went about on various city jobs requiring men who would like to make some extra money doing an unspecified job that night.

A local industrial firm assisted with manpower.

The operation went off without a hitch.

The next day, being advised by the local agent of what had taken place, Southern's vice president, who was in Greensboro as an inspection tour, came to Goldsboro in his private car and had Aldermen Davidson and Robinson to come to see him.

"I'll put you fellows in jail," he said, but did not appear to put out. Davidson he was told to see the same result, though he promised court action.

Southern backed down from its original demands. A series of conferences between the railroad's Goldsboro attorneys and city officials resulted in a consent judgment before signed by Superior Court Judge R. A. Nunn at the April, 1968 term of court.

It was ruled that the plaintiffs were not entitled to an injunction requiring the city to rebuild the tracks and had "no rights, equities or interest in the Center Street right of way."

They were entitled, however, to "recovery of the sum of \$2,500 and costs of this action."

It was a small price to pay for being rid of the main stumbling block in the beautification of Center Street.



July 4, 1976 Goldsboro New Argus article about Meters Epps and the unauthorized removal of the rail road tracks.

MISS ORY

Bronson: Tell us about Miss Ory and her Ghost stories

Mary: Oh, yeah, Tyff would like that.

Christine: Miss Ory Thompson was the Indian lady that helped momma for years and years.



Bertie Epps, Christine Epps, and Ora Thompson



Ora Thompson

Note: Ora Thompson was actually married to a hobo named Lemuel Thompson, who rarely came home. Everyone called her "Miss Ory", even though she was married. He first husband had died and left her with young children before she married Lemuel.

Mary: I never did found out how she came to live with you. You never did tell us ...I knew she lived with you, but you never told us how she came to live with you.

Christine: Well, she had a group of children – I don't know it was a whole bunch of kids. You know, I don't know exactly myself. But, I know they were put in an orphan home. This was her first husband – died and left her with this big bunch of kids. And she had no skills whatsoever, except housekeeping. She couldn't make enough to support them in that section of the country cleaning house. So, they were put in an orphan home. Then she married this Thompson man, and he was a genuine, certified hobo. He only came home about

every 3 months, six months. He was a genuine hobo. [Mary: I never knew that] He'd come by and make contact and be gone again, just stay... [Mary: he rode the rails?] Yeah.

Christine: So, she helped us. I don't know where momma actually ran into her.

Mary: So, did she ever get her children back? Did she stay married to this man?

Christine: I met one of her children. She had one daughter was simply beautiful. Her husband was white, full blooded Caucasian. She was, uh, full blooded Cherokee. [Mary: Miss Ory was?] But she thought the world of us, you know just...

'Cause the day she took me to music lessons, we came out the door and I said "Miss Ory, let's take a short-cut, this way, we got to see the" .. We can't – go to the music lesson then we got to go to the western movie that afternoon. And she loved Gene Autry and she thought he was the greatest thing in the world when got to go see Gene Autry. And she thought I knew what I was doing, I was 12 years old, I should have known. But I got confused – got lost – right in my own back yard! [Mary: oh no!] [laughter] We were walking, walking, walking, walking.

And it begin to get funny to me. She begin to get mad. Boy, she could curse a blue streak-- I'm telling you, you could roast marshmallows with her language when she got to going! We kept walking and walking, and it began to get dark. I didn't recognize any of the section. Finally, we met this man, "you know where this road leads to?" He said, "Yes – the creek" and she said "THE CREEK!"--And she was mad, then! All the time--all of a sudden ...all the time she'd been carrying my music books, without realizing it and all of sudden she realized she's carrying them – and she threw those things down! And all the going, she said "If you weren't whose child you were, I'd beat you to death!". I said "You would, if you could catch me, Miss Ory!" and I'd run just ahead of her. [much laughter]

And we wasted her whole afternoon at the movies – she didn't get to the movies. We finally got over to the section of town near the high school. Then all of a sudden I knew where I was, you know. It's a terrible feeling to be lost.

Mary: In your own back yard. You lived there all that time.

Christine: So, I said "Miss Ory". [Miss Ory replied:] "What! " She was so mad! I said "Let's cut through here, I know a short-cut!". [laughing]. She wouldn't go a step. I mean, she wouldn't race me. She wouldn't take the short-cut – and it really was that time!

Mary: Did Miss Ory live with you? Christine: Yes, she lived right back in... Mary: 'Till the end of her days?

Christine: Well, when your uncle (Roy) came out, after she died, he said "Well, our family cemetery has been integrated!". We've got an Indian in it now. She and her sister are buried in our family cemetery.



Head stone of Ora Thompson and Glennie Morgan in the Gwaltney Family Cemetery at 613 Hospital Road, Goldsboro, N.C.



Interior of the Gwaltney Family Cemetery in Goldsboro, N.C.

The area behind the green patch is filled with a row of African Americans. These individuals were not known to the family, but their graves were preserved by the family when the city began constructions of the new Goldsboro medical center.

Mary: I don't know anything about her sister.

Christine: I didn't know her sister was ... but anyway, she's buried there. She didn't live with us until she got .. 'till she died. Then she moved back down to Onslow county.



Glennie Morgan with her husband

Christine: And old Lemuel Thompson –his name was Lemuel, by the way – isn't that strange?

Mary: Like Laman and Lemuel?

Christine: You don't find many Caucasian men named Lemuel.

Mary: Did she stayed married to this man, all this time, with him coming and going like that ?

Christine: Oh yeah, it didn't make any difference to her, you know. And there was nobody else to marry or care about anything. She didn't even act like she ever thought about him, you know. Just when he shut up, she'd talk to him, that's all. As far as I knew, he was full-blooded Caucasian, didn't look like anything...



Lemuel Thompson

Your aunt Mary took miss Ory for a ride one day down...When you say Onslow county, it doesn't mean anything to you, but that was bear country..They had bears down in that country, I meant real bears – you could go out in the morning and see the tracks, and uh..what was the name of that Marine base? [Bronson: Camp LeJeune] and

The man I worked for said “That is not the way you say that word!”. He said, “I know the man that it was named for – His name was pronounced LaJerne , quit saying Camp LaJune”.[laughing] He was French or something.

Anyway, your Aunt Mary was taking Miss Ory a ride down that way one day and Mary said “That's the crematory over there. You want to be cremated when you die?” She said, “No, I don't want to go to the bad place, soul and body, too!”...She thought the world of us.

Bronson: She told you stories didn't she?

Christine: Miss Ory did, but I can't remember hers as well as I did grandma's-- but not many, not nearly as many.

[comment from Bronson (not on the tape): I remember mother telling us about some of the ghost and witch stories miss Ory would tell. Mary and I were both enthralled with the tales of those stories!)



Ora Thompson

TEENAGE BERTIE GETS EMBARRASED

Christine: Oh, there's one I'd like to tell you, but I don't think that's good for the family (laughing) Momma had a brother that was just...his whole existence was fun, I mean he was just full of mischief all the time. One day he talked her into throwing a kerosene rag into the well to see the pretty colors, and then, you know, dipped frantically to get it out before grandpa got there. Momma must have been about Tyffanny's age, just a teenager—it doesn't sound nice, but I'll tell you anyhow – you can edit it out –you know how to edit –

Momma said she'd never been so embarrassed in her whole life. Of course, teenagers then weren't as broad minded as they are now, you know--they were really prissy.

Anyway, this uncle – I forgot which one, if it was- if it was Royal, or the other one. I think it was Royal, came in to her boyfriend. Momma said she was holding her breath. Always afraid he was going to say something to embarrass her. He said "Hey, you want me to tell your fortune? Gal said "Yes'.

She didn't see how he could say too much. So he said, "Well, hold out your hand". He looked at it real seriously, you know. "Well, your fortune is bad – but it could be worse -- If it weren't for that hole down there, your belly'd bust! " (lots of laughing) She'd never been so embarrassed in her entire life! And she told grandma about it. And Grandma told grandpa about it and Grandpa wouldn't listenShe wanted him to get a good licking for that, you know! . (lots of laughing)



Young Bertie Epps

ROY AND MARY ALMOST DERAIL A TRAIN

Christine: But, my brother and sister were little, I don't know, 7 or 8 years old. And we showed them how to put straight pins across on the railroad tracks. When the train came, it would run over them and weld them together and make scissors. But you see that was setting a bad example, it was my fault. Because Dood [rhymes with food] and I used to take the straight pins, you know just regular straight pins, we'd take 'em out and go lay 'em crossways on the railroad irons-- tracks, you know. Train come along and weld them together, or move 'em and make designs out of 'em, and we'd get 'em off.

Well, Roy and Mary saw us doing that – and they were little fellows, see. So my brother and sister were about in first grade about six or seven years old. And one day, they came home and they decided to make some scissors too, one day. But they got those big railroad spikes and put across. And mamma and I were in the yard watching the 5 o'clock train, we call it, come along. The train came around the curve just before it got to our house –and it was sharp enough they always slowed up – and all of a sudden the train kind of shook. It hit those irons and nearly wrecked that passenger train. The engineer knew that we were the only house there – the only kids there, so he sent the police out.



Rail road spike, with base plate

Note: Roy always claimed that he put base plates on the tracks. Christine said that it was railroad spikes.

It wasn't long before the police was there – and said some children had put spikes on the train track and almost derailed the train – and, uh, we were the only children around, so it had to be us! (mild laughing). And they told them what happened, the size of the kids, you know, they didn't know any better. But momma had 'em take 'em in anyway. They take on up there! Scared 'em to death! It did scare them.

Mary: I wonder what they said to them? They learned their lesson.

Christine: I don't know what they said to them. I didn't get to go. My brother and my sister were so scared! They made me stay home...I wanted to go so bad, but they wouldn't let me. Roy laughs about it and said, that was the beginning of his police career right then ---he decided to get on the other side of the law (laughing).

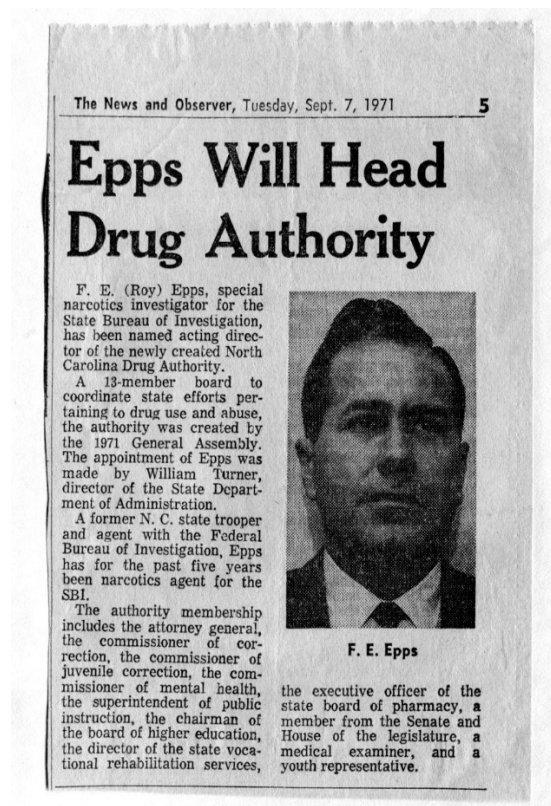
But, those were two scared kids, they really were frightened. Momma was the one that was scared – the thoughts of wrecking a passenger train and the number of people that could get hurt! They were two scared kids!

But, Roy grew up to be a police officer, highway patrolman, and worked for the FBI and all the stuff, you know.

Bronson: wasn't he head of the North Carolina Bureau of Investigation ?

Christine: Oh, yea – then he got to be head of the drugs in North Carolina – head of the North Carolina Drug People. So, you came from a lively family! (laughing) We grew up a lot.

Note: In 1971, Roy became the head of the North Carolina Drug Authority.



CHRISTINE LOOSES HER CLASS RING

[unrecorded ... a question about the dirt road between her house and the main road]

Christine: That's where I lost my class ring, in that little road that came down to our house. We had some lumber delivered there. I hadn't had my class ring but about two months. It was so pretty, Brand new – and I was so proud. I laid up on the truck, I was going to help them unload the lumber and I forgot it. So, that class ring is buried there somewhere in mamma's yard or up that road 'cause I know it fell off before it got to the railroad. And it's been there – for how many years? Sixty, fifty years, anyway. So, it's packed down. Someday somebody excavates down in there and finds that blue sapphire. I guess it was Sapphire, I don't know, anyway it was blue. Really pretty. Mamma worked hard to pay for that. [Mary: it has your high school year on it and everything?]) It has the year, and it has my initials inside. I was sad about that!



View toward Christine's house (by the green tree in the background). This is the dirt road where her class ring is buried. The little house on the left is where Miss Bertie Parrish lived for a while. This was a small guest house belonging to Libby Gwaltney Sadler.

CHRISTINE MAKES MR HOBBS MAD

[Christine jumps to a new topic]

Christine: Hey Louise – you marry me, and I can carry my name on? Whew, can you imagine the thoughts that went through a 16 year old girl's head and he was in his late 80's ? (laughing)

Bronson: His name was Hobbs?

Christine: M.E. Hobbs. He was Mr. John F. Hobbs' dad.



Mr. M.E. Hobbs, father of J.F. Hobbs. (Owner of Hobbs & Son Stockyard)

Bronson: O.K. But, John F. owned the stock yards?

Christine: Yeah, but see, he wouldn't have any children because he was afraid they might be mentally disturbed or something. He was the one that gave us the cow.

Bronson: What was the name of the guy that got mad because you wouldn't open the door?

Christine: That was Mr. John F.

Bronson: That was John F. Who was it that told you not to open the door?

Christine: No, it was his nephew, that graduated that graduated for MIT that was the head bookkeeper, that fed this false information to Mr. Jim, you know. Well, it wasn't false, it just didn't mean anything. And he told me not to open that door. See, I was collecting cash from

people that were buying at the stockyard – I was collecting cash. He said “Don’t you open that door for anybody, except me!” and I said, o.k. He was the only one I knew. I’d never seen Mr. Hobbs.

Boy, he came in storming in out of the storm, you know, and he was Lording over everyone said “open this so, and so, door”, you know. I said “I can’t do that!” Mr Banks said not open it. Boy he had a fit. But it didn’t matter to me -- I didn’t open it. But from then on he trusted me.

Bronson: Well he would – that’s integrity – that’s what you have to do.

Christine: That’s what Edgar said – and that’s what I did !

Bronson: That’s memorable – I remember those stock yards.



In April of 1940, there was a big fire at the Hobbs Stock Yards.

CHRISTINE AND THE PEEPING TOM

Christine: Yeah, Sometimes you do real stupid things. Your Aunt May and I were getting undressed one night. I was about Tyfanny's age (16 or 17). And we had window shades like this. One of us didn't draw the shade – it was down like this. And I was down to my slip when I looked and saw these two eyes peering through the window -- boy I caught mad! Stupid – what would I have done with that guy if I had caught him? (laughing) I was out the door, like a shot after him! He ran. I'm sure it was one of those Wells boys over there – they wouldn't admit it. (laughing). But I thought about it later – what a stupid thing to do!

Mary: it could could have been big 6 ft 2, 250.

CHRISTINE: [LAUGHS] What would I have done – if I had caught him?



Christine - Outside the Greenleaf LDS Chapel



Christine Epps - at the Clarks, North Carolina Train Stop

CHRISTINE SEES A MAN HIT BY A TRAIN- LIKE TINC

Christine: Things always seem to happen to me when I'm down to my slip! I heard a train whistle just blowing, blowing, blowing one day. I looked out the window, I was down to my slip, again. I looked out the window and the guy was on the railroad track was sitting on it just like Tince was. And I saw the train actually hit him. I went running down and the train stopped and the engineer came back, picked him up and took him on to town. He just sit right down on the cross-ties.

Mary: without realizing.. Ooh. On purpose?

Christine: I guess so, without realizing something, I don't know what. That 's the way Tince was – Tince was drunk, that's the reason he was sitting there.



Man sitting on the railroad tracks.

HARKERS ISLAND AND THE CAR ACCIDENT

Note: Harkers Island is 110 miles from Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Christine: There's a little island right off the coast of North Carolina called Harkers island. That's the area where Blackbeard did his pirating down there, you know. Well any way, and we were about 19 years old, the branch president (President Fulghum) one morning was going to drive us down there. It was he and his daughter, named Ila Gray and we called her Shug (pronounced sug, like sugar).

Anyway, we would go down to this island, for a meeting. On the way – early in the morning - now, he didn't see the little pots that was supposed to detour, so he ran off the hard surface and hit the mud and we went rolling, like this, you know. And the car turned over about 3 times and landed right in the ditch, right between a tree and a tractor! And we landed right between where they were doing construction work, between these big roots, you know, big trees – that car placed just as neatly. And this girl friend, her sister lived in Salt Lake, raised up – and all the girls wore hats your age then, Tyffany, wore hats. I never will forget she straightened that hat like hits and said “Oh, me, I'm probably half dead and internally injured!” (laughing). I never will forget that. But she straightened that had real good first. Half dead and probably internally injured! We were out in the middle of nowhere. I mean we were really nowhere. Mary: How did you get out of there?

Christine: Well, nobody was hurt. We just had a lot of glass. Oh, one of the farmers around there came and pulled us out. Mary: Did you go on to your meeting?

Christine: Yeah, we finally made it to Harkers island. We loved to go down there because of their accent. I don't know what kind of an accent it is they have – but any of the old people you could ask 'em, you know “well, Is this a good time to go fishing”? Wait until the tide is high and then ask. And the one old lady – always picking on her, you know – we'd ask her. “I told you 49 times you can't catch fish on a high tide!”. (laughing). Her voice would just get higher and higher and higher! Mary: A mixture of English and something else!

Christine: I told you 49 times you couldn't fish on a high tide!. (laughing) But we loved to go Harker's Island – that was fun then It's an interesting spot – it really is. And then there's a Marine Base. On your way down, if you go the right road, you can see the Marine Base down there. **Bronson:** Are you talking about Cherry Point? .

Christine: Cherry Point. Yeah. You have to take a little bit of a detour – maybe a whole lot of detour, but it's worth it. **Bronson:** Well, I was stationed at Cherry Point.

Christine: You were stationed at Cherry Point ? – I didn't remember that! Oh – so that's where you were stationed. If you had taken another route over a little bit, you could have seen Harkers Island. I don't know how – it used to be really a nice place to go, if you could go in the day around the water and stuff and go fishing. Elder cook came..I mean it was just, uh...



Harkers Island, North Carolina

In the wake of terrible storms and dislocation that uprooted Diamond city in the early 1900s, the Mormon Church sent elders to Shackleford Banks and Harkers Island. Mormons soon outnumbered the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church which had been founded on the island in 1875.

Joel Hancock's book "Strengthened by the Storm" is a gripping account of the challenges the Mormon Church faced in try to find a church home. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints of Harkers Island now maintains the largest congregation in the Down East region. A national wave of anti-Mormon sentiment was sparked by the Smoot Hearings in 1904, fueling fears that Mormons secretly continued to practice polygamy. The relationship between the Mormons on Harkers Island and their neighbors deteriorated. Residents threw rocks and oyster shells through the windows of the LDS meetinghouse and fired at least one gunshot into the building. In 1906, arsonists burned the meetinghouse to the ground. Organized Mormon religious services did not resume on Harkers Island until 1909. A new LDS meetinghouse was constructed on the island in the 1930s. Despite these difficult beginnings, Harker's Island has one of the highest percentages of residents as members of the Latter-day Saints of any locality in North Carolina.



Harkers Island, North Carolina in 1944
Relief Society

(front row, left to right:) Virgie Lewis, Annie B. Guthrie, Annie Rose, Annie Lee Lawrence, Edith Willis, Gertie Willis, Letha Lewis, Blanch Willis, Lillian Davis, Belva Gillikin, Mamie Hamilton, Clara Willis, Edith A. Willis.

(second row:) Nettie Brooks, Naomi Guthrie, Flora Belle Willis, Hannah Guthrie.

third row:) Glennie Guthrie, Mattie Whitley, Bessie Hancock, Nannie Willis, Hattie Rose

These are women that Christine would likely have known.

TAKING CARE OF THE MISSIONARIES

Bronson: How did you get started taking care of the missionaries?

Christine: Beg your pardon? Oh, at our house, Grandma Gwaltney's was one of the first places – it used to be there were certain homes that you were welcome in – and they were always welcome at Grandma's house – and at church, they just went wherever people invited them. In Goldsboro, our house was the main place.

Bronson: Where was their bed at ? I can remember the house, but I can't remember..

Christine: O.K. Well, you remember you went up on the porch, you went to the left and you went through the door and there was a bedroom and living room all together, and then the kitchen and a dining room. Well, if you had gone down the porch some, you go in another door- and that's a separate area.



Bertie Epps Home in 1971.

Bronson: O.K. I remember that. [**Christine: Can you remember that?**] Yeah, there's two doors to go in.

Christine: Yeah, and they slept in that. (the door on the right in the photo).

Bronson: So the number of missionaries changed every night? You said you never knew how many missionaries you'd have the next day.

Christine: No, they might come in some that night. All of 'em had our address. That's the first place they went to, because I looked after their mail. And mamma always had cold milk, and pimento cheese and chicken and cakes – she always had a refrigerator full of something to eat – and they'd come down and eat and sleep if they needed to and ...

Bronson: And then they'd leave and go somewhere else?

Christine: Say what? No, they were...that was kind of like their headquarters. Then maybe they would go – be invited out to Nahunta, or somewhere else out in the country. [Bronson: and then they'd come back) Our house was empty of some missionary there. And Elder McLean was the district leader and he stayed there for a while and whoever else was his companion, you know. You can the letter and he'll tell you all about it. Just rehashing it.

That was in '42. And then when they thinned out and more people invited ...They were really..Do you remember going out to Nahunta? I don't know if you remember that or not-- fifteen miles from Goldsboro here. McClean was helping the branch out, and after they got them established why then things began thinning out and then the war came along and one thing and another.



1942 - Nahunta LDS Chapel Being Constructed

Nahunta Chapel Being Constructed

ELDER MCLEAN

Christine: But Elder McLean was one fine missionary. He kept a daily journal. And so he went in his journal when ...I've had 3 or 4 letters from him. I think the first one was about 50 years since.. This was in 1942 –I'd have to look on the date of the letter. Say, I got the letter 5 years ago – the year 2000. Six years, wouldn't it. How long would that be? [Bronson: 1942 to when?} 2000.



Elder McLean - Missionary



Elder McLean, when he wrote the letters

Bronson: 58 years

Christine: And he signed it “Elder McLean”. Of course he'd been a Bishop and everything else, you know. But he just signed it “Elder McLean”. You should really read that. It's interesting. 'Cause we were building a church out at Nahunta and he put lights on the porch for us. I remember him say that.. You know where we lived on the railroad. Well, the people on that side of the tracks, toward the highway, had lights and those on this side didn't, 'cause there was a dispute between the power company and the railroad. And we like to never to got power over there. But, we finally got it. And he installed the lights for us. And, I remember him getting off the pole and coming down and putting the box on the porch and then he hit the switch and said “Let there be light”.

I've got autographs from President Callis and several of the stake missionaries. See, we were in the ..let's see..what were we in, the Southern States mission? No, we weren't in the Southern States I forgot what they called ours. Anyway, I forgot what they called ours, but anyway it's been changed over the years. But I've got to go to bed now. But I would like for

you, if you have time tomorrow, to look over that letter- you might like a copy of it. 'Cause it does give, uh..You'll have a real good idea, cause he got in his, uh.. like the night we went to Gwaltney's – they went to Aunt Frankie's a lot, too – We went to the Gwaltneys and had this to eat and that, of course-- And to sister Sadlers. And then we went back to sister Epp's, you know. And then he tells all the food there.

My mother, and your Aunt Mary and I have washed more dishes for Mormon Elders than anybody you'll ever see, I believe – it was every day. But we enjoyed having 'em.!

Bronson: That's like running a mission home.

Christine: Uh, Uh – same thing. We were family to 'em, what we were.

Bronson: That's pretty expensive –I means, with all that food.

Christine: Well, see, we had a garden. Mamma raised a garden, and uh, and then they had the milk and stuff – Yeah, It was heavy on the budget, but she raised so much of the vegetables and... But she raised so much of the vegetables and different people gave us fruit, you know ,grandpa had his nut trees, you know- and, oh, momma bought some chickens so they'd have plenty of eggs. I don't know . Anyway,somebody, I don't know, gave us ham once—I can't remember who that was - I believe that was uncle Cullen. But, anyway, there was always plenty to eat and they enjoyed it.



Bertie Epps, in her garden

Christine: I know- that's what I'll do—It might interesting to the children if I got out some pictures, you know when I get time, some pictures of the missionaries. You can't tell. You might run into one out here. You just don't know.



Elder Gilbert McLean



Elder Gilbert McLean



Unknown Missionary - Goldsboro, North Carolina - around 1942 Location: Yard of Bertie Epps



Unknown Missionary in Goldsboro



Elder Jacob Kellersberger with Miss Louisa Thompson.
She lost her entire life's savings in the 1929 stock market crash
(about \$100)

Elder Kellersberger with Miss
Louisa Thompson.



Missionaries helping out.



Bertie Epps and Elder Kellersberger
Around 1940.



Mary Melinda Epps with the LDS missionary Elder Kellersberger

Christine: Well, I would like to get that letter out, though. I kept it because there's so much history in it of that particular time. And I have one from Aunt Libby that she wrote me. I was asking about when Grandma joined the church. So mamma told her. Mamma wrote it out, and Libby typed it up. About when they went to the Presbyterian church, or what it was, and how the missionaries came, and so forth, you know. That's good church history there.

Bronson: I'd like to read that letter.

Christine: I've got that in letter form. And that's in my papers.

Bronson: Where are those at?

Christine: That's in my treasure box, that's where I keep my money. I keep his letters in there. I've got his letters and the bank book, my savings bank book. That's about it.

Bronson: Is that in the closet in Jon's room?

Christine: Yeah, it's in a cigar box (laughing), sitting right out in the open, nobody would notice it. (laughing). You wouldn't expect to get anything valuable in an old cigar box. I'd get me a new one, except you can't find 'em any more, you know they've valuable now. This is an old White Owl somebody gave him (e.g. her husband Jack). And the lid is gone, so, It don't have a lid on it, just papers sticking up. You'd never in the world think there was anything worth bother with. Of course, Wayne knows what's in there. I'll show you tomorrow where it is.

Christine: But that would be real good church . .and he's reliable too, you know. Well, McLean went off to the war. And you should read in there, this is a 2nd letter he wrote me, about his experiences and how he was divinely saved during the war. Boy, that makes you have chills. I'm glad you mentioned it, 'cause I want you to read that.

Bronson: I'd like to read about that.

Christine: Well, if it weren't for waking Jon, I'd go and get it and let you read it tonight, but I'm afraid I'll wake him. I'm about done for anyway. Well, I'd better get my snack and take my pills. But, that brought back some memories.



Christine's "Treasure Box". The lid had come off, but when Bronson looked through Jon's closet, he found the lid was hiding underneath other items and reattached it to the box.

Below is the letter from "Elder McLean" where he describes some events in Goldsboro while he was a missionary

Sept. 25, 1992

Dear Mary,

What a most-pleasant surprise it was to hear your voice again on the phone a few days ago,,,,,it still sounds like I remember you from so many years ago.

Since that time, so--o--o many memories have flashed back across the years, happy memories, I might add,,, of the many, many kindnesses, and most generous "southern-hospitality" to those of us who humbly served as Missionaries in your area. Your Mom, Bertie was a most gracious hostess.....providing us with many delicious meals, as well as lodgings, etc., etc.,....

If my memory serves me correctly, I first met you in the Hospital where you had just had an appendix operation,,,,correct???? I had just been transferred to North Carolina East, and been assigned as your District President at the time under the direction of Pres. James P. Jensen, Mission President, in Louisville, Kentucky. Your older Sister was a little closer to our age, Christine,,,and she was a jewel, too. She was a good friend of Sister Chloe Hodge, in Raleigh, who we later came to know and appreciate, for the many things she did to help us from time to time.

As I went back through my missionary-journal, and photo album, I ran across a lot of entries, and pictures, some of which I've had copies made and am enclosing. It's fun to "relive" such pleasant, happy times,,,,,with such wonderful people.

Before I refer to just a few of the high-lights of those memories, I'll give you a quick update, briefly of my activities since that time. I went back to the University of Utah, here in Salt Lake City, (Engineering School) but World War II soon ended that, I was drafted, and eventually ended up in the middle of the War in Belgium and Germany. That's another long story I won't go into now. Finally I came home, thru Marseille, France, on a big liner with 11,000 aboard.

I, too, married and went to work here,,,,,always active in some sort of Church assignment,,,starting as Ward Clerk, Counselor in Bishopric, the Bishop, then High-Councilor,,,with few breaks between as Scoutmaster, (when our own Sons were then up to that age)-----we had 3 girls first, then 6 boys. They are all Eagle Scouts, 6 of them have been on Missions for the Church plus 1-girl who served in New Zealand,,,,,and the oldest girl was with the Peace Corps in North Africa for awhile. At the moment, they're all away,,,just Maurine & I alone in this big house. But they're in and out with their families, and we thoroughly enjoy having them come home whenever they can,,,we have plenty of room to spare now. I'm still the handy-man for the Ward & Stake,,,whatever the needs are, mechanically, in any of our buildings or stake recreation center. The 2nd Daughter, who still lives nearby, is currently our Stake Relief-Society President, and is International Purchasing Agent for the Church,,,,,she's often making business calls to the south Pacific islands, Japan, etc, while she's visiting with us late in the evening (daytime over there, while night here).

So much for that-----according to my journal, on Tues. Nov. 18th, '41 I met Christine Epps, at the Post Office while picking up district mail,,,she said that you were now recovering nicely from the appendix operation,,,we went to Chloe Hodges,,,,,
(Sister Callaway (former Dist. Pres. So. Carolina)

to Chloe Hoages,,,,,,

On Dec. 20th, Hyrum Maples, and Elder Galloway (former Dist. Pres. So. Carolina) asked if I would get permission to perform Marriage for Jasper L. Jones and Ollie Jane Maples,,,,,which I did,,,on Sun. Dec. 21, 1941,,,my 1st Marriage. Followed by a fine dinner at the ~~Maples~~ Aycock's. Later, back in Goldsboro, after Church we went over to the Epps, to figure out something for Mutual program,,,and ate fruitcake and had good, cold, buttermilk.....

On Wed. Dec. 24th, 1941,,,,at Epps,,,,played Chinese-Checkers (for pennies) ~~and had to laugh at Mary trying to beat me-----we had taken~~

Thurs. Dec 25, 1941,,,,Christmas Day -----didn't get up till about 8:30, then after taking care of District reports,,,,about 11:30 a.m.. drove out to Epps and soon had a "luscious" dinner.....in the evening went out to Saddlers and had another big supper..... Dec. 30th,,,w/J. Denver King,,,then to Raleigh, w/ Chloe Hodge, Jimmy Arrington, KD & Christine Spencer.

Jan. 6, 1942, w/ Cartledge's @ Tarboro.....15th, Administered to Christine and Mary Epps Grandfather. 16th, w/Herman Aycock making plans for the Nahunta Chapel. 21st, w/Worth Potter and J.R. Bass.

Feb. 11th, 1942, up at 5:00 a.m.---heavy rain---took (Sis. Epps) & Christine to work. 12th, w/Maples & Aycocks,,,,,w/Denzel... 15th, w/Wm. Brock. 17th, w/Irma & Ed Henderson & Ianier's @ Chiquapin.

Mar. 12th,,,,Algebra, w/Christine Epps..... 31st, Squaring up walls and digging out basement area for the Nahunta Chapel (w/4-teams of mules w/scoop buckets-----stayed w/ the Maples)

Apr. 6th, w/Wilson's,,,Missionary district meeting. 15-18th, forming and pouring concrete for basement at Nahunta. 30th & May 1st, poured the basement floor @ Nahunta. Sun. May 3rd,,,,dinner at the Epps. Sun. May 10th, took the L.M's (Sis. Gardner and Tucker) in to the Goldsboro Sun. School for a fine Mothers Day Program, then dinner at the Epps, then down to the Albertson Chapel for the last session of their conference,,,,then back to Goldsboro and out to Frankie Gwaltney's and spent the night.....

May 28th, 1942, spent the afternoon helping put shingles on one side of the Nahunta Chapel.

Sun. Sept. 20th,,,,@ Church, gave a short talk along with Iathan Wiggins & Worth Potter.

Oct. 4th,,, S.S. @ Nahunta....Goldsboro Sac. Mtg. w/J.D. King, & Elders Pollock and Webb.....Stayed at Saddlers.

Oct. 5th, At Howards Chapel & Jim Strouds, Bro. Byrd, R.D. Harper, Fannie Davis. 6th, At Jacksonville & Wilmington & Hampstead, then Warkers Island.

Oct. 26th, Missionary meeting @ Nahunta Chapel 10:00 a.m.,,, Pres. Jensen and his wife, along with Apostle George Albert Smith arrived for the 2:00 p.m. Session at which Apostle Smith offered the Dedicatory prayer for the Nahunta Chapel. Sun. Nov. 29th, 1942.....from Howards Chapel, drove back to Goldsboro for Services-----gave them a "Farewell Sermon"-----stayed at Epps.

Mon. Nov. 30th-----told everyone "So-long" ----not "Goodbye" and headed West-----towards SIC, Ut., w/stopover in Ky., Central City, etc., where the similar great friends and members greeted us.

Enough of a brief review.....The Epps were mentioned on almost every page as I went thru.....you're all the greatest.....I love and appreciate you'all more than you'll ever know.....One of my favorite sayings includes this thought,,,,,"you have to live your life forward,,,,,but you only understand it backwards".....this letter is looking backwards 50 years now,,,,yes, I've mellowed in years and experience,,,,,but you and yours are still some of the absolute "GREATEST",,,,,,

Thanks again for being part of my memories,

P.S. Some of the other Baptisms I remember in N.C., included Mary Isabelle Gwaltney & Needham Eugene Jones (Goldsboro), Alice Mae Hamilton Smith (Wilmington), William Clayton Henderson and Willden Adolph Nethercutt (Beulaville), and Thomas Leo Braxton, (Greenville),,,ones that I personally performed.

P.S.-2,,,Excuse my poor typing (its all the machines fault, of course.)

PS-3 The pictures w/notes on back are for you
the other set you might want to send on to
Christine when you write her some time.
—thanks—

Below is the letter from "Elder McLean" where he describes his experience in World War II being captured by the Germans.

Dec. 3rd, 1998

Dear "Chris"

Now don't you dare FAINT as you read this letter,,,,,yes, it's the same (but now getting older me "Elder McLean"----still busy as ever, but NEVER forgetting those choice years back in N.C., in 1942.

I still have in front of me your last letter, dated Oct. 28, 1992, thzt I've been intending to answer ever since. But what really brought on the actual-doing,,,,,was reading in the local Church News about Pres. Hinckley announcing the proposed Temple for the Durham-Raleigh area. Thats SUPER!!!

I'm going to "put in a special-word" for Mary & Billy,,,,,that somehow they can overcome the temporary-barrier-----that they'll be able to take the necessary steps to qualify to receive the choicest-blessings to come to anyone in mortality. I haven't decided just how that might be possible yet but,,,,,I'm going to work on it.....they are such a choice couple,,,,,Mary is still so very-special,,,,,I really don't remember Billy that well,,,,,but he must be, since Mary thinks so. (And I have to put in this too---NO-ONE will ever take the place in my memory of "Chris Epps" of Goldsboro,,,honestly!!!)

So much for the introduction----now to bring you up to date a bit on myself and family, etc.. After returning home to SLC, after my Mission, I went back to the Univ. of Utah, Mech. Engr., Dept., and toward the end of my Senior Year, I was drafted into the Army, here at Ft. Douglas, Utah. After Basic-training in Ft. Riley, Kansas and Camp Howze, Texas,, I went overseas to Europe, with a Combat-Infantry Unit,,,ending up right in the middle of the "Battle of the Bulge" between Belgium and Germany. It was rough, as you might well imagine (so totally different from my previous life----) but I'm a tough survivor-type. I'll find a way to cope with the good Lords help. During part of that time out in the Ardennes Forest---3 ft of snow and about 0 deg.F, I was taken as a P.O.W.down over into Dachau,,,,,a German extermination camp. But after 3-weeks of getting to know the place from the inside,,,,,while asking for directions (from you know who),,,,,I got a special "mental-message" and I followed it explicitly----going out thru a rear door (that ALWAYS was locked previously) quickly dashing into the forest land that surrounded the place,,,,,going under-cover,,,mostly in the dark of night,,,until I was well away,,,up streams and creeks so I couldn't be traced by footprints or scent,,,,,after two weeks making it back to my Unit near Nuremberg (where the War-Trials were later held.). I later served in the Counter-intelligence Corps 3rd Army Hdqtrs,,,and still later with the same at 1st Army....undercover,,,in civilian clothes,,,out in front of the Front-lines.

So much for that,,,,,after the War, I waited for about 3-months down in Marseille, France, for a chance to come home,,,,,finally almost 11,000 of us on a BIG ship that had been converted to Army use as a troop ship,,,and 11-days seasick on a rough ocean,,,finally seeing the "Statue-of-Liberty" in the harbor back in good old USA. I had been back just 6-days when I was asked to be the Ward-Finance-Clerk, here in the 10th Ward, where Maurine had been living with her Sister while I was overseas. With Wife and one daughter to care for, I went to work and got on with life. Later, was asked to be 1st Counselor to the Bishop here in the Liberty Park Ward, Liberty Stake, where I served for 8 years, before the Bishop was moved on to be Stake President, and I became Bishop for another 7 years,,,then to the High-Council etc etc.. We ended up with 3 girls first, then followed with 6 boys,,,,,all later Eagle Scouts and Church Missionaries. They are now married and scattered,,,but we are still close-knit,,, talk to them regularly if we don't see them personally. (Just got back from a week down near Corpus Christi, Texas, with our youngest Son and his wife and family.) Yesterday I put up Christmas lights on a new house we built and moved into about 6 months ago. All on ground level---our knees don't go much for up & down anymore.

(cont'd)

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
LIBERTY PARK WARD BISHOPRIC
LIBERTY STAKE
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Had to start another sheet---this Letter-Head one was on top, so you get it.

You intimated in your letter that you had added a few pounds (don't feel bad, so have I---still 6'3" but now 200#,,,along with what comes with the years.... but at least I still THINK young. Yes, I too realize that I'm getting long-winded but for the most part I would much rather listen, than talk.

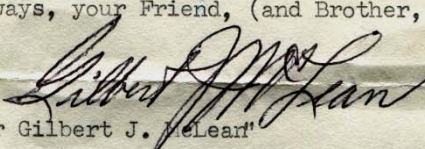
Our 4th Son, David, is now the Bishop in the Ward we live in,,, (now we have to confess our Sins to our Son), and he's got me in as his Ward Financial-Clerk. That is something I did for years and years, longhand, now its on the Ward Computer. So much easier to recall and total things I used to do the hard way.

Mary's last letter made me aware they have 3 children, and that she is a RN, so is Maurine,,,she was head Nurse in Surgery at a local Hospital when we married. Mary has been an avid Genealogist,,,thats a tremendous job,,,tho I'm glad my oldest Sister, up in Logan, Utah does that for our family. What with Ward and Stake assignments, along with being the local "handy-man" for all the Widows & Orphans and Misc our Son the Bishop bequeaths on me, plus we just built a new home ourselves and that involved yard-work, sprinklers, landscaping, etc etc. No excuses, I love being helpful to those in need. As we have the full-time Missionaries in for dinner occasionally, I think how often Bertie (and Chris & Mary) took such good care of me---and I'm still Eternally grateful for all of that.

As some Poet once said, "Life is Sweet, because of the Friends we make, and the things which in common we share,,,and we want to live on, not because of our selves, but for others who care. Its giving and doing for someone else, that the joy of the world is found. And we want to live on not because of ourselves,,and this joy of the world is found in the making of Friends"....And YOU and Mary are near the very TOP of those I consider real-friends.

Thanks again,,,for being such a special part of my life of memories.

As always, your Friend, (and Brother, in the Gospel)


"Elder Gilbert J. McLean"

P.S. I'm going to send Mary a copy of this letter, so I won't have to repeat it all.

HOW CHRISTINE MET HER HUSBAND, JACK GARDNER

Bronson: You need to back up and tell us how you met Dad

Christine: Oh, well that was very simple. I had, uh, I had been going with this engineer, I mean mechanic, from Long Beach airport. I lived there in Long Beach. First went on vacation. I went from Goldsboro to Long Beach, on vacation. No I didn't ! I went from Goldsboro to Los Angeles on vacation. 'Cause Lillian Gwaltney's husband was on the LA PD. O.K. I visited with her. That's my first cousin. Decided, you know, my time was up. So I started out - got out to San Bernardino And I thought "What am I going back to North Carolina for?" I haven't seen what I want to see, yet. Got off the train at San Bernardino. I mean, that took a lot of nerve. Stupid.

I got off the train and went in the station and there was nothing but Indians and Mexicans. Dark. So, I went up to the ticket agent, I told him I was going back to LA and asked him if I could stay in the office with him until the next train. So we got to talking and he said "Do you want a job?" I said yes. He gave me three openings, I mean three places to go. Union Pacific had openings in Long Beach, one in Riverside and one in LA. So I took the appointment and went out and worked in Long Beach. And I went with some boys. I was going with guy, I don't know what his name was. I can't remember.

Bronson: Didn't you have boy friend back in Goldsboro?

Christine: Oh, I was engaged to him – that was beside the point!(lots of laughing). Engaged – I was wearing his ring, but I didn't have any intentions of marrying him. You know, they call "one for courtin' and one for supportin". Remember that! [more laughing] No, I wanted' to go with Dawson just as long as I could without marrying him. And I did. Some Gardner gal picked him up while I was gone.



Christine and her fiancé, Kimber Dawson



Christine and her fiancé, Kimber Dawson

THE GOLD AND GREEN BALL

Christine: In February, we used to have a Gold and Green Ball --- have you ever even heard of a Gold and Green ?

Mary: they used to have them when I was little.

Christine: You don't remember them, Bronson ? Bronson: Yes

Christine: Well, it's time for the Gold and Green ball. And Jack was there – asked me for a dance. And I danced - and I couldn't dance, and I stepped all over him and so we called it quits. But I went with some solider from the Long Beach Airport, I don't know what is name is. So that was it. About a week later I was coming out of the Union Pacific ticket office and ran right square into Jack. Straight into him. He said "Where you going" I said "to Lunch". He said "I'll buy the lunch". I said "Naw – I'll buy my own lunch." So I ate with him, but wouldn't let him pay for much. Then, that's how I got to going with him.

Mary: That sounds like something kind of out of the movies. You know, where you meet somewhere and then – well, two or three days later, you know they show on the movies and "ooooh" funny meeting you here!

Christine: It sure wasn't love at first sight –I can tell you that! And I started to going with him. And he'd go out on flight – he delivered airplanes. Right in between the flights, while he was home, I was going with him, the rest of the time I dating this other boy. And one day, Jack, - now you won't believe this or not, but this is true, Jack was out – they were fixing the airplane, you know, looking it over and getting' ready. Jack was talking to the mechanic and I was living at 92 Bay Shore then, they got talking about their girl friends and Jack said "Where does your girl friend live"? He said "92 Bay Shore". And Jack knew I was the only one living, renting there! So, this young idiot came over and gave me an ultimatum, you know, had to be one of 'em,, that's all. "Bye"! That's the reason I can't remember his name. He didn't give me ultimatums!

Note: The LDS church at one time held elaborate best-dress annual dances, for teenagers and adults, called "Gold and Green Balls" Below are photos of a 1950 "Gold and Green" from Jack Gardner's home town, where his sister, Faith, was the queen.

Within the confines a limited budgets, the best band available was hired and the cultural hall decorated as lavishly as possible. Sponsored by the youth "Mutual Improvement Association" (MIA), the dances typically attracted young and old. The dances continued to be popular until changing tastes in music and dancing made it somewhat difficult to put on a dance that appealed to both adults and youth. The official MIA colors were green and gold. Green stands for youth and growth. Gold stands for purity and perfection. Combined, the colors symbolize the young men and women of the Church and their MIA programs. The order of the words was changed to "Gold and Green", to make the phrase more euphonious. See: <http://billywardlegen.blogspot.com/2014/03/my-mother-and-gold-and-green-ball.html>



Gridley Stake Viennese Waltz Group - Gold & Green Ball 1950
Bottom Row - Harvey & Wanda Coe, Drex & Pearl Tolley; Middle Row - Noble & Buelah Hepworth, Wilbur & Beth Mills, Mary & Jess Chandler, Dawna Brink and Ira Jensen. Back Row - Omer & Betty Barrow, Marvis & Bob Fife.

THE RADIO PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Christine: There used to be a radio program on – called, uh, - what's the name of the thing? Anyway, it was like a treasure hunt or something. Anyway, it was a mystery- is what it was. I got really engrossed in that, 'cause it was a continued mystery. It was a good one! I was listening to it, and Jack said "Will you marry me?". I didn't answer. He said "Well you going to make up your mind, or do you want me to do it for you?" I said "I will, Jack I will, Jack". I meant, I would make it up, you know. He took it for "Yes". [laughter]

He came over the next night with engagement rings. You should have seen that ring – looked like something Scarelett O'Hara would wear. I said "I, I just can't wear those rings". I said "I don't want another engagement ring, I've got one! [laughter] So, then he wanted me to send that back. I said "I'm not going to do it. He didn't send it to me, I'm going to carry it back to him and deliver it in person". That's exactly what I did. It kind of hurt his feelings, but he shouldn't have picked out rings without me along. I'm the one having to wear it.

See, I didn't want two rings. I had one engagement ring. That was enough. I didn't the trouble to get another one. 'Cause I wasn't so sure about that. Anyway, then we went down together and I picked out that one – you know, I bought a neat band, you know – just a nice neat band. That was some courtship! If I'd have been Jack, I'd have told me to got lost!

Note: The family is not certain which radio show Christine was engrossed in, but one likely candidate:

"Inner Sanctum Mystery" (first aired in 1941) . This is a show that Christine would have enjoyed both in North Carolina and in California.

See: https://archive.org/details/OTRR_Inner_Sanctum_Mysteries_Singles

WEDDING DAY – Nov 1, 1943

Christine: We went to Salt Lake to get married. I was hoping for snow. O.K., it was on a Monday morning and the first snow of the season – it was beautiful. About 4:00 in the morning. On the way down there, I said “You know when I get up there and they ask me if I want to get married this morning, I might say no as well as yes.” ! [laughing] Jack said “Well make up your mind before we get up there, will you please!” But he put with up a lot ! [more laughing].



Jack and Christine Gardner. Wedding photo Nov 1, 1943

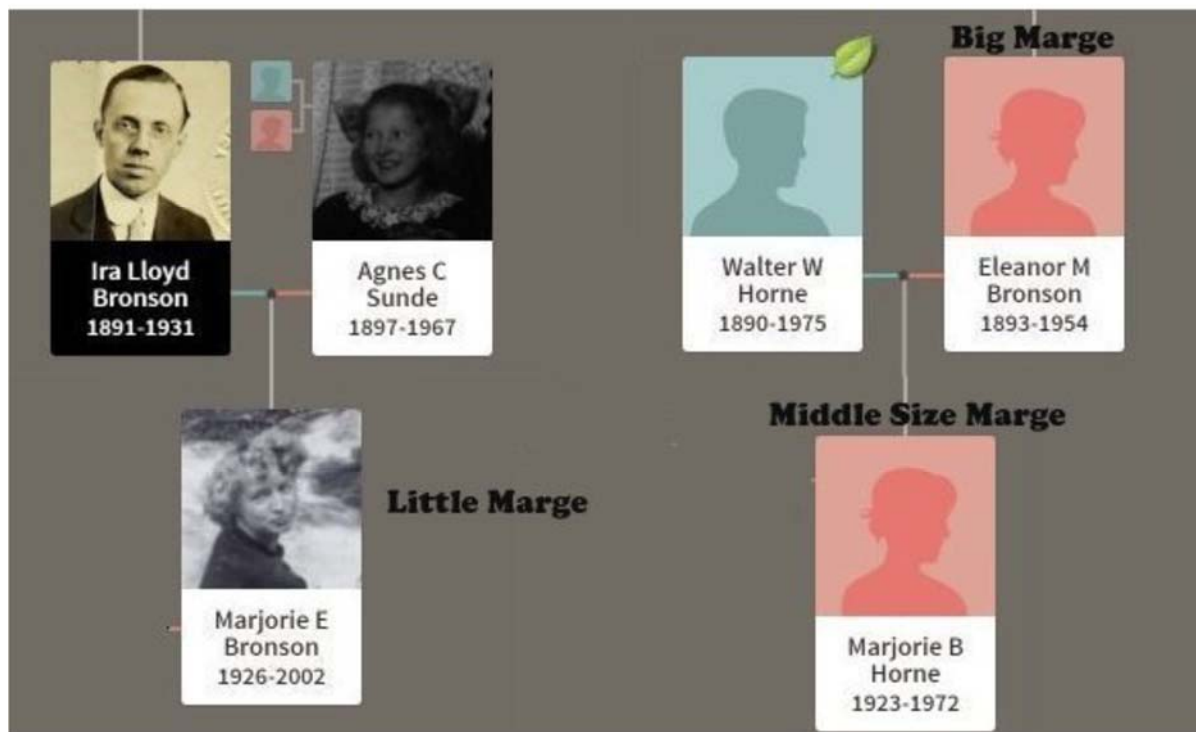


The Salt Temple, with a fresh covering of snow

MARJORIE BRONSON

Christine: Anyway, when we lived in Long Beach, that's when I met Marjore Bronson and I ... there was big Marge, middle size Marge and little Marge. And I said, when my first child comes along I'm go to name her ..name the child for you. She said "what if it's a boy?". I said "I'll just use your last name". That's the second child.

*** (Note: "Big Marge" was Eleanor Marjorie Bronson. She was the sister of Marjorie's father, Ira Lloyd Bronson. So, "Big Marge" was her "Aunt Marge". Marjorie Bronson (born in 1926), after whom Bronson Gardner was named, was the daughter of Ira Lloyd Bronson and Agnes Sunde. Ira died in 1931. Agnes eventually married Harry Broner. "Big Marge" had a daughter named Marjorie Bronson Horne. She was born in 1923. She was "middle size Marge". Thus, Christine named her son, Bronson, after "little Marge".)*



Mary: Otherwise he'd been Marge! [Lot's of laughing]

Christine: The first child – 'cause Elroy had to be first, for Jack and Elroy, I mean Roy. So I told her the second one, the second one. She was the step daughter of my landlord. He owned a big restaurant and house there. I was going ..Well at Long Beach (I don't want to a long monologue, now) during the war, you couldn't get –not for love or money – could you get an apartment in Long Beach – that's all there was to it - they were taken.

LONG BEACH APARTMENT

Christine: Well, Jack and I – just married, you know – we found one room out on this section of town, but one room now, we were confined to. Couldn't eat, or nothing. It was the worst basement –you weren't allowed any food. Well one morning, I got up about 9 o'clock – we were right on Bay Shore. Got out and went down to the bus stop about 9 o'clock to go to church on the other side of town.

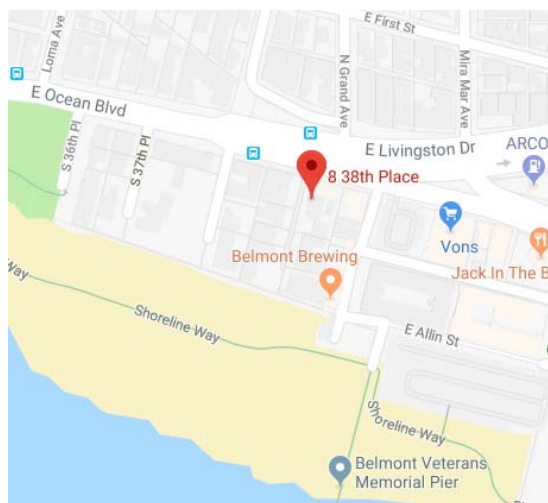
This guy was sitting there in a cowboy shirt, just, you know "WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT THIS TIME OF MORNING?". I said "going to church". "WHAT THIS TIME OF MORNING – WHERE?". He just kept right on probing me, wanting to know what I was doing – everything. I had told him – but this still hadn't come.

He said, "Well, you see that house over there, inside the wall and restaurant – a beautiful home, right over the ocean. Yes, that's mine. (she thought to herself) "Aren't you a lying bum !", just sitting there with his plaid shirt on.(laughter). He said, son-- my nephew was in the Navy, but he got killed. And I had built an apartment for him- he never used it and I haven't ever let anybody have it. But since you go to church at 9 o'clock in the morning, I'll consider lettin' you have it.

Mary: Pretty good reference, huh!

Christine: So, mamma was visiting at the time. She was standing there in the room with us whenever the phone ring – that was cozy, so (laughing). But, he said "you come over tomorrow, and I'll talk to you." So, the next day, momma and I went over, and I was surprised – he was there-sure enough it was him. He took me up and they had the most beautiful rumpus room, right out over the ocean. He looked after my food stamps.

(Note: their new apartment was located at 8th-38 Place, in Long Beach, California)



Location of 8 38th Place in Long Beach

Christine: He said, now whatever you do, don't put more than a 100 watt bulb in this lamp, or whatever size it was supposed to be. One night I did – and it caught fire! And he had a fit – he really had a fit! And Miss Bruener, uh Bronson, came down and said “well, don't scare her to death, Harry! ”

Oh, and they we going to give a party one night. He knew I was a Mormon and didn't drink. Jack was out on a trip. And, Miss Broner came to me, she said “Don't you take one thing that Harry gives you tonight, he's going to try and slip something in your drink.” (laughter) Take whatever he gives you, but don't drink it ! So I did. And so, I took 3 or 4 ones and then I started getting a little loud, you know just like I was feeling real good, you know – and he got scared! (lots of laughter. Mary said “Oh no what have I done!”) So I paid him back. Really scared Jack would come in and find me half drunk. (more laughter). He was a character.

They came out to see me in North Carolina. Marjory was his step-daughter. His name was Broner - was his name. His wife was an independent millionaire and he was an independent millionaire. And they got together. So they didn't marry each other for the money.

But his name was Broner and his wife's name was Bronson. That was her husband's name. So it was Marjorie Bronson. Well then, big Marge lived out in Hollywood and they had a –I think she something, I don't know, foster care or something – really adopted them about 18 kids. One of the biggest places you've ever seen in your life. They took me all over. Showed me the movie star's homes. And she had it organized. I mean had those kids organized. One did the orange juice. One did the toast. It was huge – you've got to walk from here down to Lois McNally's to get to the kitchen, you know. It was huge place!

Mary: Now those kids each had their separate jobs?

Christine: She taught them well. She was interested in human nature.

Bronson: Well how'd you get so close to Marjorie?

Christine: She was down there all the time – underfoot. She was about 18 and took a liking to me for some reason. She just stayed all the time – and just -- she was a pretty blond, she really was. Reminded me a lot of Donna Ostergard, she had the same – lots of teeth – and the same vivacious manner, you know.

One day I was out, Mr. Broner was talking and he said - asking me if it was alright to use the piano, and he said “Can you play it?” I said, “Not really, just a few church hymns”. “Well, do you need some lessons” ? And he was a really gruff old man, you know – he'd scare the life out of you. I said ‘Yea, some day I'll get some”. He said “Well, I rent one of my houses to a music teacher and he'll give it to you.” Here's a man teaching professionals – going to give me do-re-me lessons, you know! He took ..

Let me tell you something. I've never been in such big room. There were two grand pianos. All these jars, mirrors and great big statues and everything- and there was still enough room to plant a garden ! (Laughing) That scared me worse than anything. Suppose I was asking for this guy. I went over a few times and I told him I wasn't going to waste his time. He said "I'll give you lessons just as long as Mr. Bruner wants you to have them." I said "Well, I – quit". (more laughing.

Mary: Sounds like he just accepted you in right in as a friend and as an equal.

Christine: Yep, and he did everything for me – those boots he wore, they were something – during the war, you didn't get anything without stamps. You want to buy a pound of sugar, you'd better have sugar stamps.

Mary: Our kids don't realize that. They thinkyou guys realize during World War II, you had to have stamps to get your stuff?

Jacklyn: No.

Mary: I haven't either. Could you explain a little bit about what was going on?

Christine: Yeah --- you were allowed so much sugar and so much –anything there was a shortage on – you were allowed so much. And they gave you book a of stamps and when you used that up – that was it. You used too much sugar – that;s your problem. So there would be all that stuff on them.

Mary: where exactly would you get the stamps? Was there like a central office?

Christine: Yea, you registered for 'em. I don't know if I picked them or they mailed them. I don't know how I got 'em. But that who Bronson was named for. Real pretty blond.



Example of Food Ration Books from World War II

JACK AND ELROY ALMOST HIT BY THE TRAIN

Christine: But they did, the Bruners told me they were going to come see me in North Carolina one of these days. “See, we’re going to drop by and see you, we drive to Florida every year”. Wejl, one day I was 9 months pregnant with Elroy. So I trolled down there, and I was looking like heck, I was still picking up pecans – I love nuts – taste on in the morning. I was just picking ‘em up. I saw this big car coming down our way, about a quarter mile from the road to our house. It wasn’t any of our relatives – you could tell by looking at the car. It was Mr. Bruner’s.



The view from Christine’s house, in front of the pecan tree, to the main road (in front of the two houses). The house on the left belonged to Bertie Parrish. The house on the right belonged to Christine’s Aunt, Libby Gwaltney Sadler.

Jacklyn: They really liked you!

Christine: They were curious too! But I told everything was just like it was, you know, they didn’t have any surprises – I showed ‘em pictures.

Mary: you went down that dirt road, down to the cross road up there, turn left, and there was a stock yard or a widget place over there was a store down to the left in there?.

Christine: John Langstons.

Note: Christine was always calling Billy's step-fatererohn Langston, instead of his real nalme, John Lancaster).



Location of John Lancaster's store. He was Billy Spiron's step-father.

Christine: Yeah, your Dad was coming out ... One day, it was the stormiest weather, he was driving the truck and Elroy was in it – he was about 3 years old. And, you know, he didn't even look. Momma and I were sitting on the porch – and here came the train ! Jack was going down the road, you know, all the windows rolled up and made that little left turn, right across the tracks. And I said "Momma, he's not looking – he's not looking!" And we both, we just couldn't watch him get hit, you know. Jack turned and here was the train – you know, collision course. And just at the very last second, his peripheral vision must have caught – he slammed the brakes and Elroy came back with a big knot on his head. And I cussed Jack Gardner up one side and down the other, I'm telling you now! (laughter). Whew – but you know, your Dad wouldn't look - he never would, you know look. "I say, he's not going to look , he's not going to look. You see, the train's coming and he's just going to drive right in front of that train." And so, just at the last second, when we saw him turn and we saw the train coming, we knew it was going to him him. Momma and I both turned away – 'cause we just couldn't stand to see the impact. And then he came back - Elroy came back with a big knot on his head. Boy! If words could have caused knots, Jack would have really knotted. I was so mad at him.

GREEN GABLES, TALTONS AND THE OPEN AIR MARKET

Bronson: And uh, I think there was kind of a country store nearby?

Christine: There was what they called “The Green Gables”. It was kind of a little dance hall place. They went ---they had meals and stuff like that and dancing. ‘Cause we were over there one night having , uh, I think it was middle of the day or something. You know, you ate, and I walked over – it was not but a few yards, you know, to have something to drink or eat – asked me if I’d like to dance. I said, “No, I don’t know how”. (laughter)

I never could get the two feet going the same way (laughter). No, I wouldn’t do that. And then, you know where the little house was there, the little gable house.

Bronson: Is that where miss Parrish lived at one time?

Christine: No, no, uh, you’re out on the highway – the stockyards, then the Green Gables – and then you made a left turn, go down the dirt road. Well, as you made the corner left turn, on your right would be the house where Billy Spiron lived when he was growing up. And you went straight down the dirt road crossed the railroad and went in to Libby’s. And then, from Libby’s you went to our house.



2018 Satellite View of the area near Christine's Home in Goldsboro. The approximate location of several locations she mentions are indicated. While Christine was growing up, Fedelon trail (originally known as Route 2) must also have been a dirt road.

Bronson: I remember where Libby's was. And when I was there, there was a little tiny house behind her house.

Christine; Yeah, Well, that belonged to Miss Parrish.



Miss Parrish's house (cottage) looking north down the dirt road toward Bertie's house, where Christine lived. Bertie's house is by the green pecan tree.

Bronson: Yeah, that's where Miss Parrish lived. Then you went down further.

Christine: That was our house.

Bronson: Right. I remember that. I think I took some pictures of that.

Christine: Well, it sure has changed out there.

Bronson: I'll I bet.

Christine: They've built up everything and tore up everything. That's what David was taking pictures of – showing what a big change there was down there..

Bronson: I know there used to be a grocery store not too far from there, 'cause..

Christine: Well, John Langston had a service station. And they sold drinks ..

Note: Christine had the habit of calling Billy Spiron's father "John Langston". Actually, Billy's father was named "John R. Lancaster". John Lancaster operated the Midway Service Station and Greenleaf Coal Company at 2205 N William.

Bronson: I remember if you went up to Libby's house, to the road, turned left and crossed the tracks, and then you come to another road, right there on the corner there was – it's not a big store, kind of like a country store. 'Cause I went in there and bought pop and candy, and things like that. It was within walking distance.

Christine: Well, it wasn't a service station, huh?

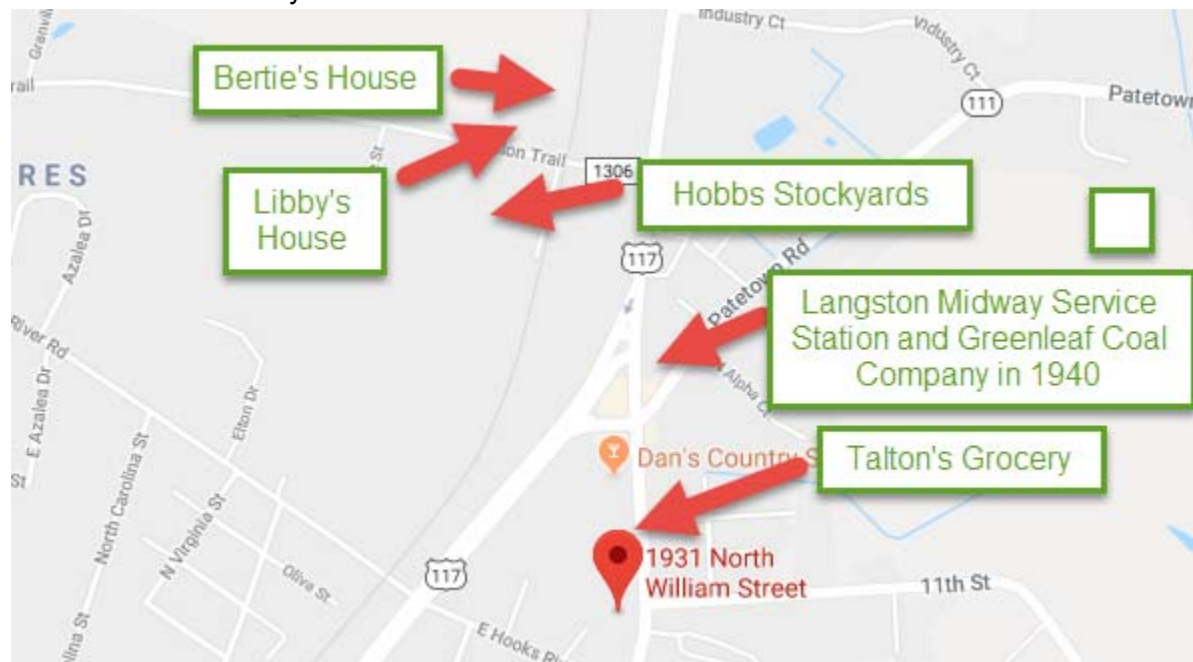
Bronson: No.

Christine: Well, I don't know unless you out went to Talton's store and that's a mile from there. There was a country store out there. Or, you could go on down toward Belfast, keep going and there was a country store there.

Bronson: No, it would have been the first one, the first one you come to.

Christine: That's was what they called Talton's, I think. But, that was a good mile from the stockyards. Well, you just remind me tomorrow I'll get that out for you, because ...

Note: Talton's Grocery was located at 1931 N William St.



Note: Bronson was trying to describe the "Open Air Market". This was not a country store, but was a place where fruits, vegetables and meats were sold. Except for a small space in the front, where the cash registers, magazines, candy, pop, etc were located there was no roof on the place, hence it was "open air". It was located across the street directly south of John Langston's service station.



BRONSON'S BIRTH AND ROY'S MARRIAGE

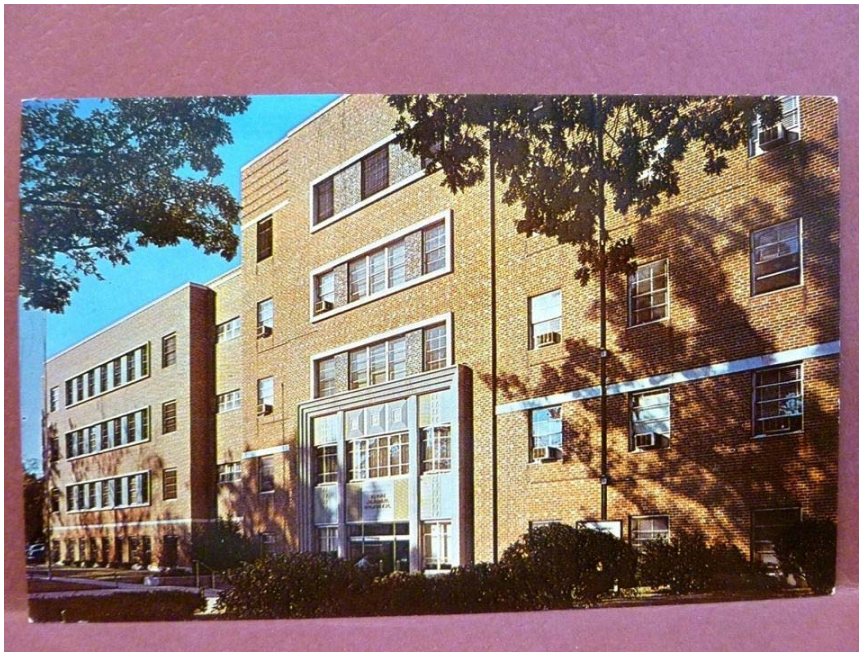
Christine: I was at mommas in Goldsboro. When I was expecting Bronson, the doctor "Just as soon as you feel any pain or anything, you can come to the hospital." Anyway, it was late at night, 11 or 11:30, I believe it was. I was in the bathroom, combing my hair – and my water broke. I had to call my cousin, Mildred, which lived in town about two to three miles. Is it three miles, would you say? Three to five, four miles?

Bronson: About 3 miles

Christine: So, she came after me. And we got to the hospital, in the parking lot, where you drive into the hospital. Any my cousin was a redhead, she had red hair and a bad temper. This black man came out and she said "Bring this lady a stretcher" – and he came back with a wheel chair – and she jumped out of that car like she was going eat him alive and said "I said stretcher!". Boy he was there with a stretcher in a minute! (laughter).



Mildred Gwaltney Malpass – Christine's 1st cousin that drove her to the hospital when Bronson was born.



Original Goldsboro Hospital, 307 N. Herman, where Bronson was born. The building is now the Wayne County Office Building.

Christine: The nurse started giving me ether, to keep the baby from coming. But it didn't help. The baby came before the doctor did. That's all there was to it. There was nothing I could do about it. I didn't even get in the delivery room.

Yeah, She was with me when you (Bronson) were born. She's the one that said "Boy, you sure did eat a lot of collards!". (laughing) I ate at 11:30 and then went into labor. But anyway, that's when I met Doris, wasn't it, yeah – Doris, Roy's first wife. After everything's straightened out – Oh, the doctor came in and said "I said call me!" I said "I did!".

But anyway, he fixed everything up. And while I was in the hospital, the nurse came in – they give that ether and made me sick, real sick. I'd have been fine if they hadn't given me that ether. "You sure did eat a lot of collards for supper", I remember that.. But I looked up at the nurse and I thought "My, she's got the biggest blue eyes I've ever seen"! And then I went back to sleep from the ether.



Doris Blackman, the nurse that took care of Christine after Bronson was born. Doris married Christine's brother, Roy.

Christine: But when I got up again, I was myself so I could tell what I was looking at. She did have about the biggest blue eyes I've ever seen. Then Bronson's uncle Roy came up to see me and saw Doris Blackman, that was her name. And they were married, right just a few months, they started going out together. And I said "Well, if it hadn't been for Bronson, you wouldn't have met Doris." He said, "Oh, grandma had her once in a while. I think I met her with grandma, too". I said "No you didn't !." He didn't start going until he came to see me, and then talked to her. But, I think she nursed grandma some, too. Anyway, that's how it came about was her nursing.

Roy liked her right off. And then she came out to the house. I think he saw her there. He wasn't too impressed. She had her hair in pig tails.

Colleen: Did you live in North Carolina, or did you just go there to visit?

Christine: I went back to have each one of the babies. I'd go back.

BRONSON'S ALCOHOL ENEMA

Christine: Your uncle Bronson got real sick one night. Fever went up to 103 or 104. Sick, sick, sick. Scared me. It was near to midnight and I was there in Raleigh. He was about two years old. So I called the doctor--doctor's made house calls in those days-- and told him about how sick the baby was. And how high the fever. He said "You've got to bring the fever down". Get you some alcohol, put it in some water and sponge him off and then give him an enema. See, I was a young mother. I sponged him with alcohol alright, but I also put alcohol in the enema water. (laughter). Made him DRUNK. (laughter). And on the time the doctor got there, he was throwing all over everyrhing-, just squirting all over everything – both ends, you know! Mary: he was doing o.k.! (laughing)

Christine: And we were using sheets, towels, we finally got to the throw rugs to put under him! (laughing). I ain't never going to forget that!

And the doctor said "What did you do, what did you do that made him so sick?" Well, I told him what and he said "No, the alcohol was for the rubbing, not for the enema! You made him drunk, you just made him so drunk!" So, when you got all sobered up... anyway, the doctor couldn't find anything wrong with him. His fever was gone and everything. He really had a hangover. You know, young mothers can sure...you just don't know ... just because you're a mother doesn't mean you know how to doctor, you know. He didn't explain. He figured that I was a grown woman with a baby – I would surely know the difference, you know. He didn't explain "Now, don't put the alcohol in the water you use for the enema!". That I had that much sense.

I really about killed him. That was a terrible drunk. I mean, he couldn't do nothing, but just kind of whimper and going to the bathroom and everything else. Bronson's Aunt Mary couldn't believe I got those instructions mixed up. Couldn't believe I got my instructions – she knew how to do stuff, you know. I said "Well, he told me to use alcohol and give him an enema". What's he expect me to do? I didn't know anything. We had some rough times.



Young Bronson Gardner

LIFE IN VIRGINIA

Mary: I saw a photo on the video tape. When I was born, there was a house with you and Jack standing out in front of it I- 'cause I don't remember the house.

Christine: O.K., that was Virginia. That's was where we lived when you were born, in Waynesboro, Virginia.

Mary: Bronson was born...

Christine: Bronson was born in Goldsboro. We moved from Goldsboro. He was born in '48. And then we moved up to Raleigh. That was on Bicket Blvd. .



Jack and Christine at their house in Raleigh on Bicket Blvd.



Jack and Christine's House in Raleigh. 205 Bicket Boulevard.

Jack and Christine's House in Raleigh

Mary: I don't remember. I saw pictures of that house. I've never seen that picture before.

Christine: I've got a blown up picture. I saw it this afternoon. We lived right on the corner, in a white house. Elroy was about 6 years old, 'cause he went to school right across the street. So Bronson was about two.

Mary: He doesn't remember any of that, either, do you?. Or do you?

Christine: They were out playing. I think Bronson has some drums in his hand, or something.



Jack Elroy and Bronson in Virginia

Bronson: Ok, now, Is that the house we lived in ?



Jack Elroy (left) and Bronson (right). The house they lived in is in the background.
Address: 969 Forest Avenue, Waynesboro, Virginia

Christine: That was it. 969 Forest Avenue. You need the address. Someone might want to look it up. Waynesboro, Virginia. 1952. Bronson's always -- I'll tell you what, your grandpa was a good looking kid. He was -- we got pictures of him, really looks real pretty. You had nice hair and everything.



Bronson – with lots of hair

Bronson: At one time!

Christine: Oh, yeah, yeah, at one time , Bronson was sitting out in the little walker thing that went back and forth, like babies rock back and forth-- and a newspaper reporter came along and liked it so well, he took his picture and he gave me the picture, so ..



Bronson Gardner about 3 months old. Photo was taken by a newspaper photographer who walked past the house and couldn't resist.

Bronson: Yeah, that's one of my favorite pictures.

Christine: Well, I think so to. You looked so happy out there. The reporter, you know, just couldn't pass by – couldn't pass that up. Happy!. You didn't see that many babies looking that happy.

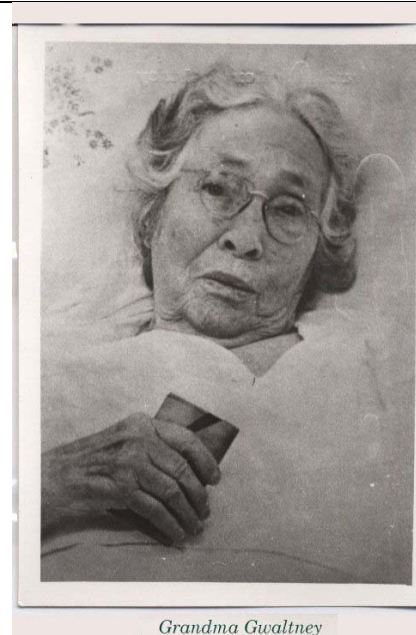
ALMOST LOST LUGGAGE (1955)

Christine; (Talking to Mary) Well, one time, I took you back. You were 3 years old. Let's see, that made - if you were three, Bronson was seven, Elroy 10. OK, I remember Grandma Gwaltney, you were three, you were cute with that bow in your hair and everything -- and she said "Oh, I'll never see these children again!" And she just really, you know, latched on to me. So, we left.

Note: Martha Gwaltney died on December 25, 1957.



Goldsboro Train Station (Union Station)



Grandma Gwaltney
Grandma Gwaltney spent the last 10 years of her life in bed, due to a broken hip. This is the last image of her that Bronson remembers.

And in about an hour, we were back home. You remember me telling you about it? We rushed down to Goldsboro. Got on the train. And we were almost to Wilson and I remembered I hadn't put my luggage on board. [Mary: no I don't remember]. Every bit of the luggage we had sitting outside the station in Goldsboro.

So I told the conductor and he put us off in Wilson. Called my cousin. She had somebody go down and pick up the luggage, so it wouldn't get gone before we got there. Then somebody go down to Wilson and get me.

So, when we got back, I said "Grandma, I told you we'd be back pretty soon!" (laughter). We were back in about an hour, you know.

Mary: Did you finally leave after that?

Christine: Had to wait until the next day. That train only ran once. I can't image leaving ALL your luggage out. One piece maybe.

A REAL ANGEL IN DENVER IN 1991

Christine: I take just one more person--she was a real angel. Looking like a person, but she was a real angel. Bronson got me a ticket on the airplane to go to North Carolina. I went up to Salt Lake First, on the Amtrak and was going to fly out of Salt Lake. About 59 minutes from Salt Lake to Denver, Colorado. And I was so sick time I got there, I couldn't walk. And this lady saw how sick I was, and I didn't have any money to amount to anything. I didn't have any money for taxis, or dinners, or beds or anything extra. And that lady got off the airplane with me and I told I needed to get to a motel. She took me to one, but, it must have been a long ways--10 or 15 miles. Got my room. Saw that I got in it and said "How about tomorrow morning?" . I said, "I want to get back to Amtrak." And I didn't have the money to call a cab or anything. She said, "Well I go to work, so I'll come pick you up about seven o'clock". She came back the next morning about seven o'clock . After I got back home, I got two or three letters from her. I wrote her a note and told her thank you. And then I got two or three letters. I finally lost track of her. But, she married and left Colorado, so I don't know what happened.. But now, she was a angel in human clothing, if you want to call her that.



Christine and grandson Kevin, waiting in Cleveland for the Amtrak to continue on to Raleigh.

SAVED BY ANOTHER ANGEL IN CHICAGO IN 2001

Bronson: Well, the other train - the last time you went out there with the stepping off the train?

Christine: And I've always had a guardian angel, I think. 'Cause when we went this past time, last year, the train in Chicago came up - was supposed to park up level with the sidewalk, so you just step right off. Well for some reason, I don't the reason, he parked about a foot and half or more from the sidewalk - out in the open - just an open space. We were getting off the train at night, my vision was blurred with the lights and the shadows and stuff and I didn't see that big hole, or I would have stepped right down in it with my right foot and I would have either had a broken or broken back, if I had stepped in that hole. As I stepped forward, I was just going to step and go right there -- this great big black man's arm went right around my waist and picked me up set me right over on the sidewalk. And Mary just- Bronson's Aunt Mary can't believe how smooth that went. He just picked me right up and took me right off. So, I've had a guardian angel my whole life.

Bronson: Hundreds of stories like that.

Christine: Yeah, all the time stayed with me.



Christine, Riding the Amtrak in 2001

Christine: I wonder if could, uh, take a Pepsi break - oh, take a soda break ? (lots of laughing)

Jacklyn: YEAH! (lots of laughing)

Mary: It's too late, you'll going to have to edit! (laughing)

Christine: He's going to have to take it out! (laughing). Bronson, If you want to help her, I'll take mine in a cup, with a little ice. (Jacklyn: Me, too!)

Christine: I'll take a little ice in a cup, Tyffany. Tell John I'll bring him some cookies in just a minute.

Colleen: Would you like a hot dog?

Christine: Uh, thank you no. We had plenty. I was going to get a little snack for ... I'm a great one, I can get all ready for bed, say my prayers, turn out the lights, and then I like to have me a drink and a snack.

Colleen: In the dark -- in the dark! (lots of laughing)

Bronson: It's better that way.

Colleen: It's a nice quiet time, huh? That's better - I mean, you don't have any one to bother you.

Christine: You've finished everything you're going to do. You're going to lie down and rest and everything, you know. Makes you sleepy.

Colleen: You don't get hungry at night. Sometimes I wake up when I'm hungry! (laughing)

Christine: Sometimes I do that. I never did get my peanut butter sandwich.

Christine: Oh, here's my favorite song (the Sesame street song "Readers of the Open Range") began playing on a tape that Christine had recorded. Bronson put it in the vcr for the children to listen to.) The conversation ended with every one listening to that song.



Scene from Sesame Street's "Readers of the Open Range"

UNFORGETTABLE DREAMS

Christine: This is Sunday, November the 7th, 2004. I'll just use these crib notes so I can keep on track. Bronson is visiting for the week. Today we were discussing dreams.

I've had several unforgettable dreams. And so I'll share about five of 'em that I remember clearly, and always will. Just a minute, I've got to tell Jon to put Bronson's book down. Put Bronson's book down! O.K.

When I was in my 20's, I dreamed about going up in momma's kitchen, to talk to momma and miss Ory Thompson, that was a friend of the family's. I spoke, and they wouldn't say anything. I asked them, just so I took up the chair and banged on the floor. And they still wouldn't answer me. So finally I said to myself "I know what's wrong - I woke up dead!". And that was the end of the dream, there. But I concluded that's what had happened.

Anyway, this dream probably came from a Sunday school lesson. I dreamed I went outside and I looked up at the sky and I saw written "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" clearly across the sky - and I'll never forget that.

And then, another one - was about six months before getting our foster son, Jon - I kept having a recurring dream of having a blue eyed, blond-haired baby boy. Jack assured me it was a dream. But when they brought Jon, he was blue eyed and blond-haired. That was about six months after I had the dream -- about six months before we got him.



Jonathan Saltzman in 1972, just after Christine and Jack brought him into their home.

And then another one was really clear. It was a few months before Jack was diagnosed with cancer - I saw a line of stitching down the entire length of his chest. The stitching was very clear. And it was some time I dreamed that before he got sick.

And then, the most recent one that I'll tell you about. It was during the spring of 2004, Mary Spiron had a blood clot --she's my sister - come loose and go to her lungs. The doctor gave her a 15% chance of living. The night it broke loose, I had the following dream - that something seriously had happened to her. I could see some kind of vehicle, I didn't know what it was and I knew she was in it, but the light was so bright, I could see only the four tips of her fingers and one of had blood on it. That's all I could see. And the closer I got to her - I knew she was in there. And the closer she got to her - the brighter the light became - and I kept trying to approach the light - and the closer I got, the brighter it got - until it finally blinded me. When I woke up, I was very disturbed and as soon as morning came, I started making phone calls. The result was that she's still living and not walking on her own yet, but she survived the 15% chance of coming through it.

But that was the brightest light I have ever seen in my entire life - even the sun! I mean, it was just like walking into the sun, except it was a white light - everything was white. And all I could see of her was those tips of four fingers and one of them had a drop of blood on it. But I knew she was in there. Still, the feeling was not scary. It was, uh, --I just couldn't get in there, where she was.



Left to right: Roy, Mary, Christine [Epps], David Spiron and Dixie Epps (wife of Roy Epps)

And I've had a lot of dreams over the years - and I should have written 'em down. I meant that, you know, that I could translate later as having something to do with what was going to happen or had happened or something like that. But I was really frustrated when miss Ory or momma wouldn't answer, wouldn't answer me. I took that chair and lost my temper! I took that chair banged it on the floor! Paid me no mind. I sad, "Oh, I woke up dead" (laughter) So, that's about the only ones that I can think of today.

Jon is a dream (Jon grunts at the sound of his name). Here comes my dream walking - 350 pounds of it! (chucking) Well thank you very much.

Bronson: Can you say goodbye Jon?

Christine: Tell him bye! (Jon grunts again).



Christine on 7 Nov, 2007 telling her stories to Seth with Jonathan Saltzman (Jon) in the background.

A FEW THINGS I NEED

Christine: There's a few things I need for myself. But, I do want to go want to go see your Aunt Mary real bad. That's the reason I said it's going to be fixing the sink or going to seeing her. So, I think I'm going to fix it.

Bronson: See her, the sink will survive.

Christine: Well, I think I'll save --I can't save anything. By the time I put \$300 of it in the bank and then I hardly got anything left.

Bronson: Well, let's check out what you need. You need to take a train, right?

Christine: That's the only way I can fly. You know what, I'd love to go down through Texas -- Is there any way you can get across the United states of America without going to Chicago?

Bronson: I don't know

Christine: Well, I'm going to find out. I hate that Chicago. It's big. Either you change, or the train changes -- or something changes. I used to plan on going through Texas, to see my first cousin, the one they call Luvenia. And we were buddies, you know, growing up.



Lucy Reuvenia Epps - (e.g Luvenia) , daughter of Meters Epps

We're the same age, but she got cancer and she died. So I don't have anybody in Florida now. But I'd never been to Florida. Been to Mississippi, Louisiana and all that. I was wondering if I could an Amtrak in Davis and go south, through Texas, down to Florida and up the coast or something like that. Or if that's wise at my age, or should I go the shortest route.

Well, I have something else I was thinking about, too, so I do have so far to train. But, thinking about it over and over again. Maybe it'd be best to take the shortest way and save

my money on my rent - pay my rent. But I plan on getting a one bedroom studio apartment. I'm not going to stay with anybody. I called Mary once and asked her up to Washington, how much does a studio apartment rent for. And, she said you can get some pretty nice ones for \$500 or \$600 hundred dollars a month.

Bronson: All right, how long would you want to stay out there, a month or two?

Christine: At least a month. I'm not going to stay with anybody. Too many peculiarities, now. I'm not going to bother any of them this time. Every time I went it's caused some problem, trouble or something.

I told Mary, that if I get that apartment and you feel like it, you can come see me, this time. I'll let them can come to see me, I'm not going to search any of them out. Come to think about, there's not many people to search on - they're about all dead. I mean, I'm talking about my cousins - my age - first cousins. But that's hard .

Bronson: Well, do you want to see a picture of Trent's house? I can go set that up.

Christine: Yeah, let me take my sugar first.

Bronson: Ok. While you do that, I'll set the video up so you can see his house (Christine had never been to Trent's house. Bronson took video of the drive to his house and a tour inside it and showed it to her.)



Trent's House in 2004

MARY SPIRON STORY - SNAKES

(Goldsboro, North Carolina - 2008, Thanksgiving)

Mary Sprion: ..."Be real quiet, I just stepped on a snake." And miss Ory said "Oh, you know damn well, you hadn't stepped on a snake!". I said, "I know DAMN well I did!" (laughter) I said, "You all be quiet, 'till i go to the house and get the hoe". I got the hoe and came back - and he hadn't moved. He was -- when I stepped on him, I thought I had stepped on a frog, 'cause i felt him twist down there. When I got back, I didn't see him. So I took the hoe and parted the bushes again - and up he came again. My throat's closing up.

Dixie: need some water, Mary?

Mary: Anyway, they all got real quiet, and I killed him and I hung it on a fence.

Billy: To make it rain! (old Indian legend)

Mary: Yeah, I showed him to three or four people. And everybody thought it was a water moccasin, but he had come out of that ditch.

Billy: It was a copper head, that's what it was.

Mary: I saw several small snakes. One, I got their nest. There were baby snakes and I thought they were the cutest things I'd ever seen. So I picked them up and put 'em in a jar and carried them in the house and showed 'em to Grandma. (lots of laughter)

Dixie: Grandma went out the back door!

Mary: Just about!

Dixie: 'Cause grandma knew what those were:

Mary: She had a fit! She was screaming (Mary imitated the sound). Bertie! Bertie!

Mary: You know, I found out in my old age that the young baby snakes are just as poisonous as when they're born as they are when they get grown.

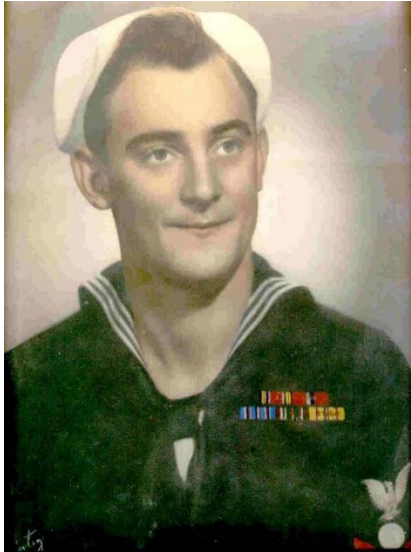
Christine: I didn't know that! They are just as poisonous? I didn't know a rattle snake was as poisonous when they were little as when there were old.

Billy: When we moved over here, the house was on three floors. I wasn't there. We had a moving fellow, we had a black guy over there - there we snakes got in there somehow or another and when they saw that snake, he climbed up her just like a ladder, trying to get away from that snake!

Christine: One day I'll write a list down on everything, so if I can't remember and need to know, I'll have written it down.

CARL SPIRON - BILLY'S BROTHER

Billy: Spend all you can, you can't take it with you. Just spent it. That's my brother's philosophy. He'll spend next month's money this month. He's always done that. He'll get out there where's living now, before he got sick, go off to California, spend 5 or 6 thousand dollars and drive around seeing distant relatives. He doesn't think nothing about it.



Carl Douglas Spiron - Billy Spiron's brother

Christine: What did he say? Mary: He said, his brother spends money before he gets it. Like he gets a check once a month., he'll spend that money this month. He's enjoyed life. Bronson: I guess he has!

Mary: I reckon it's alright. He's enjoyed it. Because, he can't enjoy anything now.

Christine: He keep track of his?

Billy: No, he spends it before he gets it! Where he counts it after he's spent it.

Christine: Oh Billy: He's always been that way his whole life. And he's got a lot of good.

Christine: He spent it first and then wrote it down?

Billy: He spends it first, then writes it down later. (lots of laughter)

Christine: Well, that's the way I've been doing it. That's the way to do it! Billy: That's the way to do it, you know. Dixie: That's for sure!

Christine: Wonder where it went, and then you write down. Billy: He don't care where it went. He don't worry about that. **Christine: That's a good idea!**

Billy: He'd jump in the car and on the spur of the moment and go off and spent 50 dollars eating' supper and don't think a bit of a thing about it.

THE MEETING PLACES --THE MAILBOX

Christine: (shifting subjects): That's was our meeting place. Do you remember that? Billy: yeah, I do! **Mary:** where was that, Billy? **Billy:** Down by railroad tracks. (chuckling)



Billy Spiron on the railroad tracks.

Christine: I always said "I'll meet you at the mailbox." And we'd take off running, in every direction. But we all wound up at the mailbox. All wound up at the same place

Bronson: The mailbox was really the church, right? (laughing)

Christine: Do you want to meet at the mail box, Mary? (more laughing) **Mary:** I don't know where you're talking about!

Christine: Out at Belfast. **Billy:** Down by the railroad at Libby's.

Christine: Or we're out at Belfast. That was always our meeting place. And we'd take off running in different directions.

Bronson: Oh, ok that was a meeting area. I get it.

Christine: I'll see you at the mailbox! And then we might go to three or places before we went to the mailbox. We didn't go directly to the mail box. I remember that. I was old enough to remember that. We might go to 3 or 4 places before we went there.

THE 'TATER PATCH

Billy : I'm old enough now I'm forgetting everything. **Christine: Yeah.** Mary: Do you remember the 'tater patch? (e.g. potato patch).

Christine: I remember the 'tater patch. Sometimes we'd go by the 'tater patch.

Mary: Do you know about the 'tater patch, Roy? Do you know about the 'tater patch?

Roy: How we gonna miss a 'tater patch, but I don't know what you're talking about.

Mary: It was the hoeinist surface (e.g. hard and weedy), I think out at Belfast school.

Billy: It's still there. Roy: At Belfast school? Billy: Yeah. Roy: o.k.

Mary: Of course, they've remodeled it. Billy: It's still there, right there in front. It was the hoeinest place.

Christine: And Roy, didn't we get watermelon in there too?

Dixie: was it after church, that you called the 'tater patch? That's what you called it. And why did you call it a 'tater patch? Mary: 'Cause it had a lot of potatoes there.

Christine: They had good watermelons, too! I bet that's where we went - the 'tater patch.

Mary: The preacher hadBilly: About 2:00 at night.

Christine: We had one place, Mary, that we used to get watermelons. I don't remember where that was. Mary: I don't either.



Christine at Belfast school in 1991, near Goldsboro, NC.

CITRONS AND WATERMELONS

Christine: (laughs) But I remember we got one one day and we couldn't break it! We kept throwing it down and throwing it down, and throwing it down - trying to burst it. Do you remember that one? Billy: That was a citron.

Christine. And it turned out to be, uh.. Billy: A citron.

Christine: What was it ? Citron! That thing kept bouncing and bouncing and bouncing- and we couldn't get it to break to save our life.

Billy: You could drive over with a car and it won't break.

Christine: But it was a beautiful watermelon, we thought!



Citron Fruits

Billy: The grow pretty (changing subjects). That railroad track out there, people used to walk backwards down that railroad track -- they had a path about that wide - a foot path - just as clean as a whistle - grass or nothing wouldn't even grow in it. They walked to school down to Belfast and then over to the school.

Christine: Getting citron for a watermelon!

Roy: There was a watermelon field patch that had almost every year back northwest from where we lived. They called "Aunt Mary". What was the black lady's name there, the black woman?

Mary: Mary Jane Banes. Roy: Mary Janes Barnes. Barnes, yes.

Billy: Yeah, they finally tore that old house down a few years ago.

Roy: Back over in that area is good watermelon - we used to get watermelons out of there some times. Billy: Those Jacobsons, the Barne's lived down there. During the week, come Sunday ..

Dixie: What does your mother do while it was .. Billy: She'd work over there at the coal yard part of the time and once or twice a week she'd

MARY'S PAPER ROUTE

Dixie: What happened ? (Mary changes the subject)

Mary: Jernigan ran out the paper bill and never did would pay me.

Billy: And that was your route, there. Lou Saulston Nanny, our first cousin, 'Cause I carried it for a time or two, but I told her I was takin' it for Mary, but it must have been for you. Went all the way down the end of that road, and then came back and then went down Stoney Creek Church Road and then back over to the highway.

Dixie (to Christine): Did you have a paper route too?

Christine: uh huh.

Dixie: Billy, was you ridin' on your bicyclcle, too ?

Billy: Well I had one in town. And Knotty, their cousin, and I started at William Street and went down by the train station, Oak Heights and back around to Greenleaf - in the morning - 5 o'clock in the morning!

Roy: I went with him a few times a day. We get up about 4 or 4:30 in the morning.

Billy: It was so cold on that bicycle. I been to the train station and you couldn't even turn the knob to open the door. They had steam heat in there and go in there to get warm. It was a hard way to make a living. Mary had a route and paid for bicycle.



Mary Melinda Epps with the LDS missionary Elder Kellersburger

Mary Epps on the bicycle she earned delivering news papers.

Dixie: Mary, was your route in the morning or the afternoon? Mary: Afternoon.

Billy: Hers was News Argus, mine was the Greensboro paper.

Mary: I had my route for a year, without missing a day.



Roy Epps (left) and Billy Spiron at Billy and Mary Spiron's home in Goldsboro, N.C.

Billy: Rain or shine. If you were late a few minutes, they'd want to know "where you been?" -- on a rainy bad day. Roy's route was down an old dirt road through Patetown and way down the river. It was a long ways down there.

Roy: It was about twelve miles each way.

Billy: You didn't get your papers until after school, late in the day. Roy: 3:30 in the afternoon.

Billy: You had to go and get on back home.

Christine: He was talking about something and you were talking about something.

Mary: I carried my paper route for one year, without missing a day.

Christine: Oh! I forgot you had a paper route! Mary: Yeah.

Christine: That's right, you did have one. Well, you learn everyday.

Billy: It would go to Knotty's house and wake him up- he's still in bed! And we'd go through the yard. (Note: "Knotty" was Darwin Earl Gwaltney, son of Christine's uncle, Cullen.

FINAL WORDS TO NEPHEW DAVID SPIRON

When Christine was leaving Mary's house after her visit in 2008, she had some final words for her nephew, David Spiron:

Christine: Aunt Christine loves David! Aunt Christine has always loved David. (Billy chuckles". **Aunt Christine WILL always love David. O.K. ? And Write Letters ! And I'll see you later. I'll come back to see your sign, ok? That's it. Bye.**

Billy: Alright. David: Bye.

Christine: And do a good paint job on the car!

David: O.K.

Christine: Save my -- Paint it pretty, ok?

David: O.K.



Christine Epps Gardner talking to David Spiron, in November, 2008 while visiting her sister, Mary Spiron in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

FINAL WORDS TO OHIO GRANDCHILDREN

Just before leaving Ohio to return to California, Christine had the following conversation with her grandchildren in Ohio:



Janet, Elizabeth and Brian talking to Christine, in January 2009,

Brian: She's waving to you! (referring to ggranddaughter, Elizabeth)

Christine: Bye, Bye, Janet: you want to wave bye, bye?

Christine: Bye, Bye, honey. Elizabeth: Daaya!

Christine: You want to hit my head? Colleen: No. no, we won't hit your head.

Christine: O.K. (laughing and chuckling) You're a good girl! Yeah, you're a good girl!. Boy, I like you! Elizabeth: ToMa! (excited sound). Janet: Hi!

Bronson: You tell her you'll think about her when you're in California

Janet: Tell Elizabeth you're going to miss her, huh?

Christine: You're not going to California with me!



Janet, Elizabeth and Brian talking to Christine, in January 2009,

Janet: You're going to leave us. You're going to California and you're leaving us, so we're not gonna see you.

Christine: Well I'm going to get up on Monday morning and take off to Vallejo!

Janet: Sounds good. (Elizabeth makes high pitched funny sounds).

Christine: Bye, Bye! You go see Nikkie now. You go see Nikki.

Janet: She recognizes that Mickey! Bronson: Who's Nikki?

Janet: Mickey Mouse.

Bronson: Oh, Mickey, Mickey!

Christine: Yeah, you go see Mickey (Elizabeth makes some more high pitched sounds). Go see Mickey and tell him bye.

Elizabeth: Bye! (followed by bird-like sounds)

Christine: Bye, Bye. Go see Mickey. Janet: Can you wave bye, bye? Can you wave bye, bye? Sometimes you... Elizabeth: Bye, Bye Janet: Bye, Bye!

Christine: Yeah. Bye, Bye, you go see Mickey now. Bye, Bye Sweet heart. Not you go see Mickey. Ok. Bye, Bye. Elizabeth: Bye, Bye. Bronson: Bye, Bye. Bye (makes sounds like a bird saying caw caw-caw) Bye By

BE HONEST

Christine: I don't know exactly what I said last night, but if there was one thing I would pick out of everything..

Elizabeth: (very interesting baby talk, sounds like a well formed sentence,ending with "bye")

Christine: She's talking (chuckling). If there's anything I would pick out of everything to stick with and stick with for a life time - and that's to be honest. Just be honest and you won't need much else.

(elizabeth continues to join the conversation with her sentences, sounds like "hey yeah" .)

Christine says "Yeah, I know" to her.

Christine: Just be honest and you're not going to need much of anything else.

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Elizabeth: (very interesting baby talk, sounds like a well formed sentence,ending with "bye")

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(elizabeth continues to join the conversation with her sentences, sounds like "hey yeah" .)

Christine says "Yeah, I know" to her.

Christine: All you've got to do is be honest and you not going to need much of anything else.

Bronson: You also talked about being reliable.

Christine: Yeah. If you promise somebody you'll do somethin' -- don't promise it unless you think that you can do it - and then do your very best to keep your promises. Because, one broken promise sometimes can destroy a whole life. You know, just one broken promise. Well, so and so was a mormon elder and he promised me so and so to do, he would do it - and he never did do it. And so, how can I trust him? How can I keep his promise if wouldn't keep his to me? So, just ordinary things. Oh, yeah.

THE TEMPLE

Bronson: Tell us what you said about the temple.

Christine: I always heard that, uh, that the temple - visits to the temple would help change your life every time you went. But, I didn't find out - I hope I'm not repeating myself too much - I never found out just how true that was until you actually started to going on a regular basis. That's the only way you can find out. You can't take somebody else's word for it because you can't absorb their words like you can their feelings. And once you start going and absorbing their feelings there's nothing that anybody can do then to take them away from me. Absolutely, you can't take it from me. It's just -- it's like the sunshine - it's yours for keeps, when you get outside and absorb the sunshine.



The Oakland, California Temple. This is the temple that Christine would have visited most often.

FINAL WORDS TO BRIAN



Christine in Garfield Heights, Ohio in January 2009.

Christine:(To Brian) Ok, well you enjoy now, ok? And you going up to your Dad's apartment or close by?

Brian: To my apartment - yeah, I'll drive i guess - it's close by.

Christine: And I'll like her wait for the plebe and see if I can get some sleep.

Brian: Ok. I'll be here tomorrow.

Christine: Drive carefully.

Brian: I will.

Christine: Ok, trail all the way. Thanks for the conversion.

Brian: I'm glad to talk.

Christine: I enjoyed it. I enjoyed talking about it.

CHRISTINE'S FAVORITE HYMN

In 1991, After playing the church hymn , "The Spirit of God, Like a Fire is Burning" on Colleen's piano,

Christine: That's still one of my favorites. That's a nice playing -- Uh oh, here's somebody's tie.

Bronson: That's Mark's.

Christine: That's a nice playing instrument. I can't imagine them letting you have for ..

Bronson: Two hundred dollars. (Christine chuckles --she always like a good bargain price.).



Christine at Bronson's house in Garfield Heights Ohio, May, 1991.

CHRISTINE'S FAVORITE SCRIPTURE



One of Christine's Favorite Scriptures: Proverbs 3:5-6. Christine is holding her bible open so that Bronson can photograph the page.

ADVICE TO GRANDCHILDREN

Christine dictated the following to her grandchildren on January 7, 2009 (not 2008).

Jan 7, 2008

Grandkids Advice

Not to give them any advice is good
always tell the truth (Baby & Seth & everyone)
try to keep your promises and
try not to make promises you can't keep
Be faithful to your friends

Church

Keep the authorities words
and follow their advice
If you follow their advice you
shouldn't have trouble
I paid 100% to things my entire life
It has blessed me all the way
I think it's extremely important
to go to the Temple it's something
you won't forget
Most married people don't have the
time to invest in the temple if you mean
plan it, it's worth the effort

I wish I could tell you dad, I love him
he was always there I've always
been proud of Bronson, ^{he's always been} well behaved
and considerate of others.

Trent - I'm so grateful he took Jon
I knew he'd treat him right.
I'm so glad.

Jan 7, 2008 (actually 2009)

Grandkids Advice

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Try not to make promises you can't keep

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He was always there. I've always been proud of Bronson.

He's always been well behaved and considerate of others.

Trent- I'm so grateful he took Jon.

I knew he'd treat him right. I'm so glad